A HANDBOOK OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

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A HANDBOOK OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to furnish the student of public speaking with a concise statement of the principles he ought to know, together with a few hints as to method. It is intended to be used in conjunction with platform practice, preferably under the critical guidance of a teacher; for that reason it is not in the form of graded exercises and assignments, but in the form of a series of collateral lectures, each covering some fundamental lesson which the student can well afford to learn from the wisdom and experience of others. No subject has been covered exhaustively, as the size of the book will show; and in most cases I have purposely tried to stop at the point of greatest interest, leaving plenty of room for further inquiry on the part of the student, and for supplementary comment by the teacher.

The book is confined to public speaking, which to me means the communication of one's own thoughts to an audience, in one's own words and personality. It is not concerned with declamation, the oral interpretation of literature, or dramatics.

I lay no claim whatever to originality. I have merely restated in convenient form — sometimes using the teacher's privilege of over-statement — a few fundamental truths most of which were old when Aristotle and his contemporaries stated them, and most of which have been restated many times. My only excuse is that no available book with which I am familiar presents these truths briefly enough and simply enough for the needs of the masses of college students who have time for only one general course in public speaking; the available books seem too large, or too technical, or too expensive, or too far above the earth. Whatever may be the faults of this one, I can positively guarantee that every problem discussed is real, every principle of daily application, every suggestion one that has been found to work in practice.

I gratefully acknowledge much indebtedness to current books on various phases of public speaking work, particularly to those of A. E. Phillips on " Effective Speaking " and J. M. Winans on "Public Speaking" ; also to the personal influence of Professor Winans and many other con-genial friends in the Eastern Public Speaking Conference and the National Association of Teachers of Speech. To my colleague, Mr. Reese James, I am especially indebted for a careful reading of the manuscript and many helpful suggestions.

The student will bear with me, I hope, for talking to him like a Dutch uncle in certain chapters, and for resorting in others to the unpedagogical practice of talking about him, behind his back, in a loud voice, for the purpose of being overheard. A more impersonal tone might have been less disturbing; but most students of public speaking need to be disturbed. And after all, public speaking *is* personal.

J. D. Jr.

University of Pennsylvania,
July 14, 1922.

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A HANDBOOK OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

A GENERATION ago it was customary to regard public speaking as an Art — meaning a Fine Art — in common with acting, interpretative reading, and elocution; and to confuse the teaching of it with the teaching of those subjects. To that fundamental misconception may be attributed much of the artificiality, insincerity, and bombast that have made the very words "elocution" and "oratory" a terror to persons of good taste.

An Art may be broadly defined as a human activity. It differs from a science in that it is concerned with doing, while a science is concerned with knowing.

But human activities have many purposes, so that there are many different arts, and many possible classifications of those arts. The most common classification is that which divides the Fine Arts from the Useful Arts — the arts which aim to give æsthetic pleasure from those which aim to accomplish a more material end. This division is frequently misunderstood, because anything so deep and fundamental as a distinction of purpose is too much for the average mind; but the terms, of course, persist, as terms always do; and activities get to be classified with one group or the other not because of purpose but because of some accidental similarity of tools or methods.

An art is not a Fine Art unless its purpose is first and foremost to give pleasure; to give, moreover, a certain kind of pleasure, namely æsthetic pleasure — pleasure derived from the sense of beauty; and to give it, finally, by means of an imitation or representation of life in terms of artistic conventions.

Thus painting is a Fine Art, aiming to give æsthetic pleasure by imitating life in terms of colors on a two-dimensioned surface. Sculpture is a Fine Art, aiming to give æsthetic pleasure by imitating life in terms of clay or marble, with three dimensions, but without color. Music is a Fine Art, aiming to give æsthetic pleasure by imitating or representing life in terms of highly conventionalized sounds. But ditch-digging and blacksmithing are in this sense not Fine Arts, and neither is watchmaking, although the latter is a very fine art in point of quality and of skill required.

In the same way we see that acting is a Fine Art, aiming to give æsthetic pleasure by a conventionalized representation of life; so likewise is interpretative reading, which combines the creative art of the writer with the suggestive art of the reader in order that the audience may experience æsthetic pleasure. Music, painting, sculpture, poetry, acting, interpretative reading — each of these is *like* life, but is *not* life, and is considered best when it is not too much like life; and this is true of all the Fine Arts.

But in public speaking we have something very different. We have, not a conventionalized imitation of life, but life itself, a natural function of life, a real human being in real communication with his fellows; and it is best when it is *most* real. We have an activity, and therefore if you like, an art; but a Useful Art, not a Fine Art. Fine it may be in some respects, like watch-making or diplomacy — for the Useful Arts may be fine and the Fine Arts may be useful — but a Fine Art, like music, painting, or acting, it positively is not.

All of this is perfectly simple and obvious, which is why I set it down, for in our present muddled state of education it is precisely the simple and obvious things that students do not seem to grasp. I know from daily experience that there is much confusion of mind concerning the nature of public speaking; and those unfortunates who as little children were made to " speak pieces " in Sunday school, and a little later to recite before the high school at assembly some gem from " One Hundred Choice Selections " under the impression that that agonizing performance constituted public speaking — those people, I say, will be doing very well indeed if they can get into their poor muddled heads a rational notion of what public speaking really is.

I know a man who can not. He is a successful business executive, forty-five years of age, tremendously capable, with a brain full of ideas, an engaging personality, a good voice and manner, and a perfect command of his tongue—in private. He can talk fluently and powerfully to two or three or a half dozen serious-minded men sitting about a directors' table, and carry his point. But ask him to appear in public and " make a speech " (using those words) and he suddenly becomes idiotically self-conscious.

"Oh, I can't make a speech," he says, giggling foolishly. "You mustn't ask me, really."

And if you are wise you won't, for the truth is he can't. The reason is that he thinks public speaking is an Art — a thing like music or sculpture, that calls for a special gift, years of drill, a masterly technique, an artistic soul; a thing essentially artificial, mysteriously unreal, only to be sucessfully performed by a temperamental genius — a talker rather than a doer. In short he thinks of public speaking as an abnormal, not a normal, thing. No wonder it scares him.

Will he get over it? Probably not. At his age muddle-headedness tends to freeze up and become permanent; the more a man learns the harder it is for him to discern through the mists of knowledge the simple truths and basic distinctions that he has missed.

But young men, and women, may profit by his example, and to them I dedicate these remarks.

CHAPTER II

MENTAL RELATIONSHIPS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

WHEN I ask a student speaker what his purpose is, in nine cases out of ten he answers: "To tell about Lincoln" (or "the war," or "the tariff," or whatever his subject happens to be). He does not say, "To tell *you* about Lincoln," or "To tell *them* about Lincoln." He uses the transitive verb "tell" without a direct object.

He does this because he is not thinking about his audience at all; he is thinking about himself and his subject matter, and how to get it off his chest. He can do this while staring at the ceiling, or the wall, or out of the window, and he can do it just as well — perhaps better — when no audience is present.

This is not public speaking. Nobody can possibly speak well when he thinks of himself and his subject and ignores his audience. He may imagine he is speaking well; he may be expressing himself beautifully. But beautiful self-expression is not the thing, unless one's stenographer is his sole audience — and I know some people who can put even their stenographers to sleep. Not power to *ex*press one's self, but power to *im*press one's audience is the measure of effectiveness in a public speaker.

Good speaking, whether public or private, is **communication.** The word means the act of sharing something with others; it comes from the Latin *con* (with) and *munus* (a business), through *communis* (common) and *communico* (to confer or consult with one another). In English we add another "with," and say that a speaker communicates with his audience. This double insistence on the "with" should serve to remind the student of the common or reciprocal nature of the act involved in communication; but of course it doesn't, because in these days of unassociative fact education and abolition of "useless" studies like Latin, nothing ever reminds a student of anything.

In order to understand this reciprocal quality the student should think of what happens when two persons converse. Both are parties to the conversation; neither is passive; each gives his active attention to the other, and experiences a sense of direct mental contact with him; and there is a spirit of give and take that is by no means lost when one person happens to have a little more to say than the other.

We are all accustomed to conversing in this manner, and most of us do it without discomfort and with reasonable effectiveness every day. We find it just as easy to talk to two or three, or a half dozen, so long as the atmosphere is that of private conversation; but the moment somebody says "public speaking" we go all to pieces, as if the situation had suddenly become different and quite unfamiliar. This is the heart of the problem, and the student who would speak effectively must positively learn that **the essential mental relationship between the speaker and his audience is always the same, no matter how large or small the audience, or how formal or informal the occasion.**

I have not said, of course, that the speaker's manner is always the same, or that it should be. Obviously it should not. It should vary to suit the situation and circumstances. Necessity and good taste will dictate appropriate modifications of posture, gesture, voice, vocabulary, phraseology, and force. But these modifications are quantitative rather than qualitative; they merely alter the scale of the speech in proportion to the formality of the occasion. Just how large an audience calls for a really public style is a matter of opinion; one speaker of my acquaintance says that to him thirty people constitute an audience; another says twenty, and another twelve. In any case circumstances will alter the number; one might speak more formally to six people at one time than to sixty at another.

The earnest student will find much to occupy him in the study of these modifications of style, but his time will be wasted if he does not first grasp the fact that public speaking is simply expanded **conversation**; that the difference between public and private speaking is a difference of degree only — a difference without a distinction; that in all speaking, public or private, the true relationship of speaker to audience is the same.

The relationship must be **direct, reciprocal**, and **sincere.**

It must be **direct** in the sense that there must be no barrier of distance or remoteness between speaker and audience; there must be no dreamy look on the speaker's face, no far-away tone in his voice; he must be mentally in contact with his audience.

It must be **reciprocal** in the sense that there must be response from the audience, expected and given, not necessarily in words, or even in laughter or applause; perhaps only in active attention and understanding; but nevertheless response. The speaker must be continually anticipating and answering the unspoken question, or meeting the unspoken objection.

It must be **sincere,** not merely in the moral but in the intellectual sense. It is not enough that the speaker shall have an honest purpose; he must be natural and genuine; his intellectual processes must be real and spontaneous, no matter how well prepared, and he must be free of artificiality or pretense. Only thus can he avoid setting up barriers between himself and his audience, destroying their attention and stimulating in himself the very " nervousness " he is so anxious to allay.

That so-called " nervousness " is after all the chief problem with most students of public speaking. I have hardly ever met a student who did not assert that his object in taking the public speaking course was "to overcome nervousness." It seems to him that that is all there is to public speaking.

"I'd be all right," he says, "if I could only get over my nervousness. I know what I want to say, but when I get up there on the platform I get all confused; I can't think on my feet, and I can't say what I want to say at all. How can I overcome that?"

My answer is that practice will tend to cure the ailment, but only with the aid of a clear understanding of the nature of public speaking, and of the mental relationship between speaker and audience.

CHAPTER III

PURPOSE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

A CERTAIN type of student speaker is like the man in the old song with the blithe refrain: "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way." He has no goal, no objective, but he goes ahead just the same.

Ask him what his purpose is, and as I have already remarked he will look vaguely about and say, "Why — er — to tell about so-and-so" — mentioning his *subject,* not his *purpose.* Rare indeed is the genius who answers unhesitatingly, "To convince the class that such-and-such a measure would be wise," or, "To entertain my audience with an account of some personal adventures."

Yet it ought to be obvious that in public speaking as in other things a clear fixed purpose is essential if one is to stand a reasonable chance of accomplishing it.

Absence of a clear purpose is a habit with twentieth century Americans. Rapidity and complexity of life lead naturally to confusion, haste, superficiality and muddle-headedness; and with these goes vagueness of purpose.

If the student speaker is to overcome the habit in his own case he must first learn by analysis what the possible purposes of a speaker are, and then so govern himself that he never speaks except with one of those purposes definitely and dominantly in mind.

Remembering that purpose in a speaker is to be considered in terms of what he is trying to do to the audience, we may fairly say that the possible purposes are:

1. To inform
2. To enlighten
3. To convince
4. To impress
5. To excite
6. To actuate
7. To entertain

Note that each of these is presented in the form of a transitive verb to which the words " the audience " may be added as direct object.

The classification is arbitrary, of course. Other writers divide differently, or use different terms;

some combine numbers 1 and 2, or 4 and 5, or 5 and 6. The student may very well analyze for himself, choosing his own terms. The essential thing is that he shall have some rational classification sufficiently comprehensive to include all possible purposes of the speaker, and that he shall use it.

Assuming that he wishes — by reason either of laziness or superior intelligence — to use the one I offer him, let me explain it seriatim.

1. To inform. The speaker's purpose is to inform when he seeks primarily to furnish his hearers with facts, especially with facts new to them; when he aims to increase their knowledge as distinct from their understanding. His effort is directed at the recording function of the mind — at the memory, if you like; and the measure of success is qualitative. A teacher giving out the multiplication table is an example; or one giving out the names of the continents; or a returned explorer recounting his discoveries. But a teacher explaining the principles of long division would not be an example — not in the narrow sense in which the word "inform" is here used.

2. To enlighten. The speaker's purpose is to enlighten when he aims to clear up some difficulty of comprehension; to present, not necessarily new facts, but a new view of the relationship of facts; to improve his hearers' understanding of a given subject rather than to increase their knowledge; in other words, to explain something to them. The teacher explaining long division *would* be an example of this; or Mr. Einstein expounding his theory of relativity; or a football coach giving a blackboard demonstration of a complicated play. Note again the narrow meaning of the word for purposes of distinction.

3. To convince. The speaker's purpose is to convince when he seeks to make his audience believe a debatable assertion, accept a statement as true, or adopt an opinion. It is not knowledge or understanding that he seeks, but agreement; though he may use knowledge or understanding as a means to that end. The legislator supporting a bill; the attorney arguing a point at law before a judge; the sincere propagandist seeking converts to a new "ism," — these are examples. But the contentious "chronic kicker," the political mud-slinger, the fire-eating orator denouncing his enemies and laying down the law, are not, for they are making no sincere attempt to convince.

4. To impress. The speaker's purpose is to impress when he seeks to bring to his hearers a new and deeper realization of a truth, perhaps an old truth already known to them; not to make them know it, or understand it merely, but to make them feel it, and feel it deeply; to sear it into their souls by challenging attention, appealing to the sympathies, and associating emotion with thought. The patriotic orator repeating the familiar message of the life of Washington, or Lincoln, as a source of inspiration to his hearers; the preacher striving to tell the old old Christmas story in such a way as to awaken new reverence of spirit in his congregation; the college president bidding farewell to the senior class in old but hallowed words, — all these are examples.

5. To excite. The speaker's purpose is to excite when he seeks to reach the more direct and more tempestuous emotional reactions in his audience; to arouse such emotions as fear, hatred, indignation, enthusiasm, hilarity, pugnacity — not as a means to an end but as an end in itself. To excite is the least worthy purpose, though not the least common. It is the purpose of the worst type of mob orator, the agitator, the spellbinder. Its independence of other purposes is the measure of its unworthiness: as a means to other ends it may at times be justifiable. Closely associated with the purpose to impress, it differs from it in that it appeals to the emotions alone, while to impress appeals to the emotions and thoughts harmoniously combined. To impress implies a strengthening of the spiritual control of the listener; to excite implies a weakening.

6. To actuate. The speaker's purpose is to actuate when he aims not merely to plant beliefs or impressions that may later work out into actions, but to move his hearers to some definite act, — particularly some act to be performed at the time and place of the speech, or very soon after. The appeal may be emotional, perhaps following excitation; or it may be intellectual, perhaps following conviction; or it may be a combination of both. People who are convinced of a truth do not always get round to act upon their convictions; it is often necessary to add persuasion — that is, to arouse their emotions in such a way as to overcome their natural inertia and provide a motive force. Examples may be found in the political speaker urging his party constituents to come out and vote: the missionary appealing for funds; the recruiting officer in war time exhorting a crowd of men to enlist.

7. To entertain. The speaker's purpose is to entertain when he has no other object than to give his hearers pleasure.[1] The pleasure may be of a mirthful or a sober kind: entertainment does not necessarily imply hilarity. Some writers use the term "to interest" in this same sense; it is perhaps a broader term, but seems to me to suggest a means rather than a purpose. Of examples, the commonest is the after-dinner speech; a more sober one is the Chautauqua or University Extension lecture of the type purporting to be educational, but really primarily intended to entertain.

Such are the possible purposes of a speaker. Clearly one of them must dominate every speech if the speech is to have unity, for unity is simply singleness of purpose.

Other purposes may enter into a speech as contributing or subordinate elements; or a speech may have both an immediate and an ultimate purpose. The student should keep clearly in mind the difference between a means and an end; between a contributory and a dominant purpose.

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[1] The purpose of entertainment brings public speaking nearer the Fine Arts than any other purpose (see Chapter I); but it is possible to distinguish between a communication of ideas for the purpose of entertaining, and an oral interpretation of an entertaining discourse. There is no real need for confusion.

He should realize that one may have many unities within a unity. A novel, for instance, may have ten chapters, four of which are informative in purpose, three entertaining, two impressive, and one enlightening; yet the purpose of the whole may be to convince. The unity of purpose of the whole novel is built out of ten lesser unities, no one of which happens to be the same as the unity of the whole. And each of these chapter unities is built up out of still smaller paragraph unities, and each paragraph unity out of still smaller sentence unities. One is reminded of Dean Swift:

> So naturalists observe a flea
> Has smaller fleas that on him prey,
> And these have smaller still to bite 'em,
> And so proceed ad infinitum.

But the most practical thing I can say about purpose in public speaking is this: I have never known a student speaker to fail because he did not have enough different purposes combined in his speech, whereas many fail every day because they have too many purposes in one speech, or because they have no clear purpose at all. The moral is plain.

CHAPTER IV

MOTIVATION

I APPROACH the subject of Motivation with misgivings, for the reason that I have never been able to make a student understand it. The word seems to paralyze all ordinary intellects — perhaps because it suggests the psychological laboratory; words like inhibition, behavioristic, and complex (the noun) appear to have a similar effect. But motivation is the only word that seems to cover the idea I wish to convey.

The idea itself is simple, and not at all technical or mysterious.

Besides a subject and a purpose every good speech must have a **motive.** That is, there must be a reason, or a justification, for its existence — or rather a whole set of reasons. There must be reasons for the choice of time, of place, of speaker, of subject, of purpose; reasons why the speaker should find it necessary to speak; reasons why the audience should be willing to stay and listen.

Sometimes the circumstances provide certain of these reasons automatically; quite often, in fact. Because of this the student seldom realizes how essential they are, and he never feels any burden upon himself to supply them when they happen to be lacking.

For example: A student recites a dreary lot of second-hand facts about, let us say, the difficulties of climbing Mt. Everest. The class quietly dozes. When he is finished I ask him what his motivation was supposed to be.

He stares at me with a slightly injured look, and then starts out with the usual formula:

"Why — er — to tell about . . ."

I interrupt him. "Yes, yes, but why should you?"

That floors him. He doesn't like to confess that since he *had* to make a speech he thought one subject would do as well as another. He stammers a little and then blurts out:

"Well — I thought it would be interesting."

"How do you mean?"

He stammers again, and then his face lights up; he has suddenly remembered something taught him in a course in composition.

"Why," he says, "It interested me, and so I thought it would interest others. The Proff in English One says that what interests the writer is pretty sure to interest the reader, and you said yourself we ought to choose subjects we are interested in."

"But," I ask, "how did the subject come to interest you? Did you ever try to climb Mt. Everest?"

"Oh, no! I read an article about it in the *National Geographic Magazine*."

"Who wrote the article?"

"Some scientist; I don't remember his name."

"Did he know anything about Mt. Everest?"

"He seemed to."

"Had he been there?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Was the article illustrated?"

"Oh, yes; quite a number of pictures."

"Photographs?"

"Yes, I think they were."

"And so you think," I continue, "that because this article interested you it ought to interest others?"

"Yes."

"Well, so it ought — and does. And the reason is that the article is perfectly motivated.

But that does not prove that a speech by you on the same subject would interest others. As a matter of fact it didn't, as you saw, and the reason is that it wasn't motivated at all."

And then I try to explain to him and to the class that there is every reason in the world why a scientist, having acquired experience and photographs of the country about Mt. Everest, should publish them in the *National Geographic Magazine;* and every reason why the sort of person who reads that magazine should be interested in the article. "But why," I ask them, "should a college student who knows no more about Mt. Everest than any other casual reader of the *Geographic* presume to lecture upon that subject? And why should a class of bored public-speaking students manifest an interest in his effort?"

They shouldn't, and they don't. And no audience ever will manifest an interest in a speech that is not in some way motivated.

It is true that outside of the classroom motivation is frequently automatic: that is, the speech is motivated by the circumstances. If Roald Amundsen is advertised to speak on the South Pole everybody knows why — why there is to be a speech, why Mr. Amundsen and not some one else is to deliver it, and why he has chosen that subject; and nobody will pay the price of admission who does not really want to hear the speech. That is perfect motivation, with no effort on the speaker's part.

Or suppose Mr. William Jennings Bryan were advertised to speak on the subject of "Money." Mr. Bryan's great reputation as an orator would provide a part of the motivation, but only a part. It would explain the choice of speaker, but it would not explain the choice of topic at all. People would be eager to hear Mr. Bryan speak, but at the same time they would be wondering what the topic really meant, and why he should have chosen such a topic for such a time and place. It would be his task to show them why — to provide that part of the motivation; and Mr. Bryan, being a skilful speaker, would do so in the first few sentences.

Not all speeches, however, even outside the classroom, are delivered by well-known speakers, or by persons of authority. Often an audience is entirely in the dark as to the identity or qualifications of a speaker, or his relation to the subject, or the relation of the subject to the occasion;

especially is this true when there are to be a number of speakers at the one meeting. In such cases the burden of motivation is likely to be entirely on the speaker; he must provide all the necessary reasons, and provide them quickly and clearly.

This is just what the college student, addressing his classmates in public speaking on a subject of his own choosing, does not do. He should understand that if he does not learn to do it in class he will not realize the necessity of doing it elsewhere. He will be making ineffectiveness a habit.

"But," says an objecting student, "it is very hard to motivate a class speech. The occasion doesn't provide any motivation, and we can't always find subjects we know all about; we don't know enough."

I hear this sort of objection very often. Let me say to the student — with brutal sincerity — that the attitude of mind which the objection represents is the real reason for his difficulty in motivation, and for a good many other difficulties that beset him in all subjects. The student of today, bred to the notion that education should be entertaining rather than disciplinary, seems to think that his whole duty is to perform a certain painless routine along the path of least resistance; that it is unfair and unreasonable for an instructor to ask him to do anything *hard*. His attitude is passive and defensive. He will not go after knowledge. He will permit the instructor to give it to him, of course — provided the instructor will be entertaining in manner and reasonable in his demands. If the instructor wants motivated speeches the student will make a reasonable effort to motivate them. If the instructor is not satisfied, well — the student is sorry, but he did his best; he cannot be expected to shoulder all the worries of the course. Let the instructor be clearer about it. Let him provide his own subjects and motivate them himself.

I am not exaggerating. Not one bit. I have had many a student, annoyed at criticism, invite me to suggest subject, or purpose, or motive for him, in a manner that said all too plainly, "If you don't like my way of doing it, do it yourself. *I* didn't invent motivation." Of course not, and neither did the teacher. But what the student seems to have missed is the fact that it is *his* speech that is to be motivated, and *his* audience that is to be kept awake.

Students who have the courage to assume a more sportsmanlike attitude, and who are willing to learn how to motivate their speeches, will find some practical suggestions in Chapter XV. But they will find the suggestions of very little use unless they first realize the need of motivation, the meaning of motivation, and the fact that the motivation of their own speeches is nobody's job but theirs.

Chapter V

ATTENTION

EFFECTIVENESS in public speaking is of course largely a matter of attention — that of the speaker and that of the audience — and there are one or two points about the phenomenon of attention which the speaker will do well to bear in mind.

In the first place there is no such thing as continuous attention. Attention is an instantaneous reaction resulting from an internal or external stimulus, and the only way of sustaining it is by *renewing* it with a constant series of fresh stimuli. "No one can possibly attend continuously to an object that does not change."[1] Fixation of attention is equivalent to destruction of attention, — a principle well known to the hypnotist, who induces sleep in his subject by getting him to fix his gaze on some bright object and to shut everything else out of his mind. The monotonous speaker does the same thing — unintentionally of course; he simply hypnotizes his audience into a deep and peaceful sleep.

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[1] James, "Principles of Psychology," Vol. I, p. 421.

The problem for the speaker is how to renew attention at frequent enough intervals. It would be a simple matter if he could follow the method used by the Pilgrim fathers in their churches. In their scheme of things the preacher who could not keep his congregation awake was assisted by a beadle, who, when he saw a parishioner beginning to doze off, applied the necessary stimulus to renewed attention in the form of a sharp rap on the head. The modern preacher, denied such assistance, generally resorts to the cowardly but commendable expedient of making his sermons short, so that his listeners do not have time to go to sleep. Some preachers — like Billy Sunday — prefer, metaphorically speaking, to rap their own listeners on the head by means of wild shouts, gesticulations, and acrobatic "stunts" — which certainly serve the purpose of renewing attention however they may stand with reference to good taste.

The speaker should remember that whatever his method he positively must provide a variety of fresh stimuli at frequent intervals if he is to maintain any sort of attention. How to do so he must learn by experiment, although he will find some hints in this and the following chapters. The important point is that any sort of monotony is utterly ruinous to attention because of the simple principle just stated.[1]

Another valuable fact which the speaker may learn from the psychologist is that attention is of two kinds: involuntary and voluntary.

Involuntary attention, which the psychologist calls **primary**, is that which is generated spontaneously by an assault on the senses; as when a gun is fired, or when a bright light suddenly flashes out of the darkness, or when Billy Sunday slides to second base. These are extreme examples; there are milder ways of getting involuntary attention through the senses. But whatever attention is purely animal and automatic belongs in this class.

Voluntary attention, or **secondary**, is that which results from concentration of mind, from the will to attend. It is intellectual, rather than animal, and is only to be relied upon in those of some mentality. The sort of attention which a student gives to his lessons in the wee small hours, with a towel around his head and a cup of coffee beside him (or perhaps this isn't done any more?) is secondary attention.

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[1] For some further remarks on the subject of monotony see Chapter XIII, pp. 107-108.

The would-be public speaker might just as well learn at the start that he can rely on very little secondary attention on the part of even the most intellectual audience, and none at all on the part of an audience that is stupid, or tired, or indifferent. Under the most favorable conditions he can expect less secondary attention from his hearers than a writer can expect of a reader. The reader gives his attention to a book when he feels most like it; he can choose his own time, place, position, lighting, and even the reading itself; he is accustomed to the idea of throwing himself actively into the world of the book; and he is less subject to distractions. The listener, on the other hand, especially when he is one of a large audience, is accustomed to being led; his attitude is passive rather than active; he yields himself to whatever stimuli are affecting the rest of the mob, whether those stimuli happen to be coming from the speaker or from some source of distraction. He is a good subject upon which to work for primary attention, but a poor hand to give secondary attention.

The speaker must therefore school himself to rely upon his own power to secure primary attention, and to do so with such variety and frequency as to avoid loss of attention through monotony. The most valuable hints that I can give him as to how to do so he will find in the chapters on Concreteness, Reinforcement, and Humor; but one hint has already been given in the discussion of the reciprocal mental relationship between speaker and audience.[1] This is, simply, that a very large part of the speaker's power to hold attention is dependent upon his power to *give* his own. Unless he is himself clearly giving vigorous attention to his subject, to his purpose, and above all to his audience, he can hardly expect them to give attention to him.

A speaker is often said to experience a "clash of wills" with his audience; to dominate his audience by force of will power. In most cases he really dominates them by force of attention. Will power undoubtedly plays a part, but indirectly rather than directly. The speaker's will keeps his mind on the subject, keeps him in an active state of voluntary attention. Through that voluntary attention he develops his own best effectiveness, and makes his strongest possible assault on the involuntary attention of his audience.

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[1] See Chapter II.

It is possible, of course, for a speaker to over-do this matter of will power — especially a speaker of unpleasant personality. It is possible for him to be so aggressive in forcing his attention upon the audience, and claiming theirs, as to become offensive; the audience feel as if he were trying to jump down their throats. There are people who always talk in this fashion, whether in public or in private, and they are probably incurable.

In the give-and-take of attention between speaker and audience, in the establishment of that reciprocal mental relationship, the eyes constitute the chief medium of communication. Through the use of his eyes the speaker conveys to the audience a sense of his own attention; through his observation of their eyes he experiences a sense of their response.

In giving attention he must remember to distribute it; to avoid giving it all to one person, or to one group, or to one side of the room, with the consequent effect of making the rest of his audience feel left out of the occasion. Neither a fixed gaze nor a vacant roving gaze will do; neither conveys a sense of communication to the whole audience. What the speaker must do is to look into the eyes of his listeners, one at a time, for a brief period only, shifting from one to another with pleasing variety and with approximate fairness of distribution. His eyes must meet theirs in focus.[1]

Because of the difficulty of doing this when one is self-conscious, some speakers fall into the habit of looking at the wall or ceiling, while others pick out friendly faces and make "hitching posts" of them. The former practice generally results in weakening the speaker's own sense of communication, and consequently his effectiveness; the latter sometimes gives the speaker more confidence and improves his effectiveness with the few friendly listeners to whom he is directing his talk, but at the expense of the general attention. The ideal situation is for the speaker to discover that *every* face is a friendly face, and so to make a " hitching post " of every listener. When he does that he sometimes gets something very like a perfect state of attention.

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[1] There are dissensions from this point of view. One of the best teachers I know refuses to look at his audiences because he feels that it is "cheap and unworthy" to have audiences "hanging upon his words." He makes a practice of talking over their heads with his eyes fixed on the thought, which always seems to be hanging from the ceiling somewhere at the rear of the room. He has fine things to say, a vigorous personality, and a powerful resonant voice; and he talks most of the time to students who are too busy taking notes to look up and watch him. It is my opinion that he is successful not because of the way he uses his eyes but in spite of it. However, he is certainly successful, and the student will do well to examine the merits of both points of view.

Apart from the speaker's own self-consciousness the chief obstacle in the way of perfect attention is distraction, and of that something will be said in Chapter VII.

CHAPTER VI

CONCRETENESS

THE value of concrete illustration in any form of discourse is so well known as to amount to a commonplace. Any student who has taken a course in public speaking or in composition knows that concrete illustration is a great aid to attention and the best means of driving a point home.

But ask him what concreteness is; ask him to explain the distinction between the abstract and the concrete, — and see what happens. I have asked hundreds, and have hardly ever found one who could explain accurately and clearly. This, of course, is normal; we use words every day that we do not know the meaning of.

If I ask ten students to explain concreteness, five will say that the concrete is specific, the abstract general. Apart from the fact that they can seldom explain the difference between the specific and the general, this is a poor explanation, because in the first place it does not explain and in the second place it is not true. The idea of good qualities, for instance, is general and abstract; but the specific idea of the quality of mercy is equally abstract. On the other hand the general idea of green, sweet-smelling meadows and rippling brooks is quite as concrete as the specific idea of one particular brook. The distinction between specific and general is a matter of quantity, scope, or extent. That between abstract and concrete is qualitative, and psychological.

Three more of the ten will say that the concrete is that which is solid, heavy, closely packed, intensely unified. They have got their concrete mixed with Portland cement; they know more about road-building than about mental processes. Another student will perhaps confess simply that he does not know the distinction; and the last one will say that the concrete is the "tangible," the abstract the "intangible." He is approximately right — if he doesn't spoil it by proving in the next sentence that he does not know what "tangible" means. It means "touchable," and in that sense his statement is at least one-fifth true.

A thing is concrete in proportion as it is in

terms of the five senses[1]; in proportion as it arouses mental images, either by physical stimulus or by suggestion.

The human mind begins, to all intents and purposes, as a blank. The infant receives sense impressions, but at first they mean nothing to him and provoke no response (except the negative, purely instinctive response to pain). Gradually, however, the child learns to recognize sensory stimuli as familiar, then to associate two or more of them together, then to re-create them in imagination, and finally to reason about them. This is the development of the thinking process, sometimes called the process of abstraction. From purely physical, or animal, impressions, the child proceeds by increasingly difficult steps of inference to the realm of pure thought.

Concreteness and abstractness are relative terms. A thing is concrete in proportion as it is in terms of the senses; it is abstract in proportion as it is in terms of the thoughts.

The senses are direct, physical, animal, and *involuntary.* The thoughts are indirect, mental, super-animal, and more or less *voluntary;* the more abstract they become — that is, the farther removed from the original sensory elements — the more volition they call for.

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[1] Some psychologists maintain that there are seven, or nine; but the old-fashioned five will do for our purposes.

This is the point that is vital to the public speaker. The concrete, being in terms of sensory images, tends to claim involuntary or primary attention; while the abstract, being in terms of derived mental processes, calls for secondary or voluntary attention, which, as we have seen, the audience does not usually care to give.

That is all there is to it. It is very simple. The speaker wants attention. To get it he must, as a rule, do something that brings an involuntary response; the abstract thought processes are not involuntary, but voluntary; therefore he must either avoid them or so support them with concrete — that is, sensory — illustrations, real or imaginative, as to make the necessary assault on the sensory functions of his hearers. When he does so they listen. When he does not they go to sleep, quite regardless of the intrinsic value of what he has to say.

When you hear a speaker indulging in prolonged abstractions watch his audience and see how lifeless they are. Then see what happens when he says, "For instance: I once knew a man . . ." At the very sound of the words "for instance" you will see the audience sit up and brighten up. I have been able to illustrate this point to classes repeatedly by making them do that very thing.

Concreteness is the soul of attention, and it is a rare speaker indeed who can make himself interesting without it. Yet the inexperienced speaker constantly fails to make use of it—partly, no doubt, because he does not fully understand it, and partly because it is difficult to devise ways of being concrete without a certain amount of hard work. When he does remember to use concreteness he almost always uses it in its crudest form: that of the definite story or anecdote, used as an illustration or example, and not infrequently dragged in by the heels. Not that I wish to discourage the use of illustrative anecdotes — far from it! But one can be concrete in other ways also. The principle of concreteness can be continuously and unobtrusively applied by means of constant attention to imagery — by the use of such words and phrases in the very statement of abstract thoughts as will tend to stimulate the imagination, and to make one mentally see, hear, taste, touch, and smell.

But the speaker should remember that concreteness is personal and relative: what is concrete to one person is abstract to another whose experiences have been different. A walrus is a more concrete idea to an Eskimo than to a native of Brazil, but a ripe mango would be a relatively abstract idea to the Eskimo. Things are concrete to an individual in proportion as they come within his particular sensory experience of life. Things he has seen are more concrete to him than things he has merely seen pictures of; but the latter are vastly more concrete than things he has merely heard about.

The motion pictures are doing much to increase the available sources of concrete illustration. Niagara, for instance, was once an abstraction to all but a fortunate few; now it is concrete to millions who have seen it in the "movies"; incidents of the World War will always seem more concrete to most people than those of any earlier war; Japanese children now seem to most of us just as real as our own, and surprisingly like them in movement and facial expression. All of this helps the speaker who knows how to make use of it.

The most telling sort of concreteness is of course that which brings the experiences of the speaker and those of his audience into closest contact. Things that they can image together give rise to the most intimate and sympathetic common interest, and lay the strongest possible claim to the attention of both.

CHAPTER VII

REINFORCEMENT

THE student of public speaking must realize that the speaker's problem is different from that of the writer, and in some respects more difficult. Too often he imagines that it is only necessary to put what he has to say in the form of a clearly worded and well constructed composition, and then speak it out loud. He forgets that his business is not merely to express himself, but to impress his audience.

It is possible for a writer to put the best of himself into a book and then go away and forget about it; and no amount of indifference on the part of some readers will injure the quality of the book itself, or its effectiveness with those readers who are not indifferent. Some writers — like George Meredith, for instance — deliberately write for a select few, knowing that the general public will not care for what they write; but the knowledge does not embarrass them or interfere with their performance in the least. Sometimes they write even better for it.

A speaker, however, has all his hearers together in one room, and is there himself. Any inattention, indifference, or hostility on the part of even a few of the audience endangers his effectiveness in two ways: It tends to become contagious and spread to others; and it tends to react on the speaker himself, diminishing his self-command, and consequently his command of the audience as a whole. If the writer feels any disconcerting reaction from his readers it is only after the book is done and out of his hands; but the speaker begins to get his reactions before he has fairly begun, and many a speech has been ruined because an indifferent minority demoralized the speaker.

There is only one way out: The speaker must shoulder the entire obligation of keeping everybody interested and attentive all of the time.

Of course some students will say that this is too hard; and no doubt it is — for them. Nevertheless it can be done.

The chief obstacle is **distraction.**

Distraction is primary attention gone wrong. The listener finds his attention engaged by stimuli coming from sources other than the speaker — sometimes from within himself and sometimes from without. Occasionally the stimuli even come from the speaker, but from the wrong part of him — his hands or feet, for instance, instead of his brain.

A listener is more subject to distraction than a reader. In his relaxed mood he gives very little secondary attention, but he is fair game for every stimulus to primary attention regardless of its source. Every time somebody coughs, or the door opens, or shuts, or the fire engines go past outside, he is distracted. If he notices a mannerism or peculiarity of the speaker, he is distracted. If what the speaker says reminds him of something else, he is distracted. If the room is too hot or too cold, or the lighting is unpleasant, or the lady sitting next to him has a vicious hat-pin, or a fly settles on the bald head in front of him, he is distracted. And every time he is distracted his distraction tends to communicate itself to those near by, and the contagion spreads.

The reader, on the other hand, being in a more concentrated mood, is more nearly proof against this distraction. There are, as a rule, fewer sources of distraction about him, because there are fewer people; and even when there is plenty of distraction he has better means of fighting it. He can, to some extent, choose his own time and place to suit his mood, instead of having to fit his mood to the occasion. He can usually adjust the temperature and lights to suit him, and pick out the most comfortable chair; and if there is no comfortable place handy he can postpone his reading or go somewhere else. He can set his own pace, reading rapidly or slowly as he prefers; he can read much or little at a time; and when he is distracted, or when he is puzzled by the text, he can re-read as often as he pleases until he has mastered the passage or caught up the broken thread of the discourse.

Compare this with the plight of the listener, and you see why the speaker's task is not easy. In a large audience the room will be too hot for some and too cold for others; the lights will be bad for some; some will be too near the doors, others too far from the speaker; some will be in one mood and others in another; some near-sighted, others far-sighted; some in good health, others in bad; some fresh, others tired. If the speaker talks rapidly he will confuse some of his hearers; if he talks slowly he will bore others; and except on the most informal occasions the listener who has failed to understand a point, or has been interrupted or distracted, will allow his attention to lapse permanently rather than ask the speaker to repeat a passage.

Obviously the speaker cannot forestall all of these sources of inattention. Momentary distractions are bound to occur. He cannot prevent them; therefore he must fight them.

Whole-hearted attention on his part will help; so also will directness and sense of communication; and so will the concreteness which makes so strongly for primary attention. But most important in this connection is the simple device of reinforcement of ideas.

Audiences, though passive, are generally well disposed and rather anxious to listen. Given a fair chance they will recover from their distractions and renew their attention. But frequently the speaker does not give them a fair chance; he says everything just once, and leaves it to the listener to catch it if he can.

What student has not had the experience of coming into a classroom late and being unable to discover what the teacher was talking about until the end of the hour? A lecturer in the history of

English literature, for instance, will mention the name of a writer just once and then talk about him for from twenty to fifty-five minutes. In this case the late-comer is not the only one in difficulty; unfamiliar proper names are always hard to catch, and perhaps half the students present will miss that writer's name. For a few moments they will listen eagerly in the hope of catching it on repetition, but if the repetition does not come, who can blame them for losing interest? Every time a listener is distracted for a moment and misses something he goes through a similar experience.

A really effective speaker reckons with this condition. He realizes that there is a constant leakage in his speech: some of his ideas are escaping some of his listeners all of the time. To counteract it he resorts to a piling up of effect, to a constant reinforcement of ideas, by more repetition and more illustration than a writer ever has need for. His motto is, " Hit them again in the same place."

Ideas may be reinforced in many different ways. Crude repetition is the most obvious; but it is by no means to be despised, especially in the case of proper names, pregnant phrases, or statements of fundamental import. Reiteration, or repetition in different words, is an excellent method of reinforcement and often a great aid to clearness. Concrete illustration, one of the most valuable methods, has already been discussed. Parallelism of construction is a method particularly useful in reinforcing relationships of ideas. The use of figures of speech is helpful. Testimony — quotation of the opinions and observations of others — is a well known method, sometimes relatively overworked by students. And if nothing else will serve, plain "harping" is better than no reinforcement at all, although it is quite possible to harp on one idea too long, destroying much of the good accomplished. Sometimes a speaker will convince an audience and then spoil it all by over-reinforcement, until the boredom engendered obscures the conviction or wipes it out altogether. But there is more danger of boredom in the kind of harping that comes from vagueness, or lack of ideas, or from accidental repetition, than in that which comes from intentional reinforcement of ideas.

The method of reinforcement is a matter to be governed by circumstances; the principle is universal and essential. Because of distractions and because of the mental inertia of audiences, things must be pounded home. A well-known educator says that he never expects anything to sink in until he has said it at least six times. His motto also, you see, is, "Hit them again in the same place."

Chapter VIII

PERSUASION

THE speaker desires above almost everything else to be able **to influence** his audience, in accordance with his purpose, whatever it happens to be.

There are, roughly, two methods of influencing people, the emotional and the intellectual. Many psychologists insist that there is no real distinction; that reason and emotion are inseparably connected and that each is merely a reaction of the whole mind. This may be true, but there is certainly a distinction in method of approach, and this distinction is useful to the student.

It is customary to speak of the emotional method as **persuasion**, and the intellectual as **argumentation.** Persuasion, therefore, may be defined as the attempt to influence others by emotional means; that is, by appealing to their instincts, feelings, or sentiments, rather than their reasoning powers. It is by no means to be thought of as limited to obvious emotional outbursts — to heroics, and "crocodile tears"; more often it is nothing but sincere feeling quietly interwoven with the thought of the discourse. It may even be interwoven with argumentation itself, in the sense that a sound argument may be put persuasively rather than repulsively.

Effective persuasion rests, of course, upon the speaker's understanding and use of the instincts, sentiments, and feelings that actually exist in mankind. These are many and complicated, and their relative power varies widely with circumstances. They will repay much study. But study alone will not help the speaker, unless at the same time he cultivate sympathy. Many speakers understand human nature and human motives, yet fail to persuade because they are cold and impersonal, or even contemptuous of the motives they pretend to appeal to.

Underlying all human motives are the basic instincts of **self-preservation** and **perpetuation of species.** Crude and obvious instincts in the lower animals, they manifest themselves in man with all sorts of disguises and refinements, but they are there just the same.

Self-preservation is the strongest motive there is, and it is less carefully disguised than perpetuation of species. "One must live," says the modern man as an apology for all sorts of selfish behavior. But he does not make the apology until he is cornered; he prefers, if possible, to deceive himself and others by pretending that it is the safety of his family or country that he is concerned about, rather than his own safety. Sometimes, of course, this is true; his instinct of self-preservation has given way to a higher impulse, growing out of his education or training. It is more apt to be true of cultivated people than of brutish people; it is one of the definitions of a gentleman. It is also more apt to be true of everybody in times of emotional stress — war-time, for instance — than in times of placid "normalcy." In war-time even the lower orders of human beings will set self-preservation aside for the sentiment of patriotism or of moral indignation. Generally, however, there is much more of the instinct of self-preservation in human motives than appears on the surface.

So likewise with the instinct to perpetuation of species, except that this is *almost always* concealed, since education has taught us to think of the instinct itself as base. But we think very highly of some of the motives derived from this instinct, including maternal and paternal affection, love of home, the desire of each sex to appear to advantage in the eyes of the other, the chivalrous impulses of men toward women, and many others. The instinct has simply been refined out of its original semblance by centuries of education; it has not been destroyed.

These two basic instincts, in conjunction with educational influences drawn from history, tradition, religion, philosophy, literature, and law, have served to plant in mankind a great variety of impulses, so deeply rooted as to constitute automatic and powerful motives.

Next to the orginal instincts themselves, one of the strongest of these motives is the impulse to acquire property. It is often spoken of as an instinct in itself, but it is undoubtedly composite. Self-preservation is at the root of it, for human institutions have so developed that one must acquire some property in order to live. Love of adornment plays a part — originating perhaps in the sex instinct. The manifold pleasures that money will buy, the love of giving to others, the love of power, all contribute, each being composite in itself; and in addition there is undoubtedly a love of possession for possession's sake, which is found in savages but increases with material civilization. But the great masses of mankind, barely able to meet the cost of living, are driven by the law of self-preservation to a greater interest in property than they might otherwise show; and the speaker can make effective use of this when addressing an audience of hard-working, every-day people.

Next in strength, if not in prevalence, is probably the will to power. This is not felt so much by those who have never had their appetites whetted by the taste of power; but among a certain class of successful men-of-the-world it is almost the dominating motive. Men of great wealth and influence will quite generally tell you that they do not care about making more money for its own sake, or for what it will buy, but that they stay in the game of big business, or politics, because they enjoy the sense of control — control over other men, over systems or institutions, over forces greater than themselves. The impulse is not necessarily selfish; it is a form of aspiration, and has done much to stimulate real progress. It is varied but universal. In one man it will be the thrill of driving an automobile or sailing a yacht; in another the genius of organization; in another the brutish instinct of the bully. But it is conscious and cumulative in proportion to experience, and the speaker will find he can appeal to it most powerfully in an audience of fairly successful people.

Another strong motive is personal pride. One likes to be thought well of by others. This may be partly ulterior; a business man, for instance, may wish to preserve a reputation for square dealing as a means of encouraging trade. "Honesty is the best policy" is a popular, if immoral, doctrine. But deep down in every individual who has felt the influence of civilized thought is a real desire to be held in good repute — even in those who have no particular ambition for fame or power. The cynical and worldly-wise often scoff at it and disavow it; but they are scoffing at "sour grapes," or whistling to keep their courage up. A saloon-keeper who was somewhat looked down upon by his neighbors not only because of his occupation but because of certain sharp practices for which he was noted, used to boast that he did not care what people thought of him so long as he made money and kept within the law; but when he died it was found that he had willed a hundred thousand dollars for the erection of a handsome monument over his grave. That gave him away; he had jeered at honor in life, and then made a pitiful attempt to buy it when he was dead.

Almost as universal as the motives so far mentioned, and the most powerful of all in some individuals, is the motive of **affection**, or personal attachment. Since it is largely an individual matter it cannot always be made use of by the speaker addressing an audience; yet there are times when the appeal to men on behalf of the women they love, or to parents on behalf of their children, will be the best possible means of persuasion.

It would not be possible, in this brief chapter, to discuss all the manifold impulses and motives of men. Devotion to God, love of country, sense of duty, loyalty to tradition, civic pride, sense of beauty, sense of gratitude, sportsmanship, esprit de corps, good taste, honesty, moral indignation — these are just some of them. The speaker's task is not merely to study them and theorize about them, but to make use of them; to appeal to them in his audience; to make his thoughts and opinions acceptable by bringing them into harmony with the impulses most strongly at work in the audience.

To that end he must never cease his study of human beings and their behavior. He must train himself to sense the impulses in his audience, and to turn them to account gently, sympathetically, and unobtrusively,—and let us add, honestly. He must remember that the finest sort of persuasion is the negative sort that we call **tact**; which consists not in an ostentatious appeal to favorable impulses, but in considerate avoidance of unfavorable ones; in putting unattractive, even unpleasant, truths inoffensively. And finally he must cultivate the virtue of **tolerance**; he must learn to appreciate the other fellow's point of view. Only by so doing can he hope to make the other fellow appreciate his.

None of these things can be learned in a minute, and none of them can be applied coldly, at will, and laid aside when not wanted. The speaker who attempts it is inviting disaster; he is deceiving himself and trying to deceive others. He must play fair, and to do so he must make these things habitual; he must *live* them, on and off the platform.

CHAPTER IX

ARGUMENTATION

ARGUMENTATION is the attempt to influence others by intellectual processes; to convince by reasoning.

Speeches which are devoid of everything except argumentation are perhaps not very common; but every speech which has for its purpose to convince is basically argumentative, although the rational processes may be completely fused with the persuasive ones. With any audience but a coldly intellectual one the fusing is necessary and desirable; argumentation and persuasion work best hand in hand. But they can best be studied separately, the processes involved being by no means simple even then.

It would be impossible to cover the principles of argumentation in a single chapter, or even in a whole book the size of this one. A four-hundred-page text-book is hardly large enough to cover them thoroughly, and a one-semester course in argumentation is always too short. The student who would learn to speak effectively is advised to make an adequate study of argumentation at the earliest possible moment; if he cannot take a course in the subject he can at least read one of the many excellent text-books.[1]

My purpose here is merely to suggest the basic nature of the reasoning process, point out one or two of the commonest pitfalls, and make a few recommendations for special study.

Most teachers of argumentation advocate a course in logic to precede or accompany the study of argumentation. This is an excellent plan, and I heartily recommend it; but I recommend even more heartily a study or review of the subject of plane geometry. In plane geometry we see the rational process, not in theory but in practice; and we see it in its simplest and soundest form, applied to the materials of an exact science.

Consider this process as seen in geometry. We begin with **axioms** (self-evident truths) and **postulates** (statements so clearly derived from the axioms as to be universally acceptable), and proceed through a succession of clearly demonstrated theorems in the order of increasing difficulty. For the proof of each theorem we must have:

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[1] See Appendix B.

1. **Materials of proof,** or facts in evidence, including (a) axioms, (b) postulates, (c) previously proved theorems, — but nothing else.

2. A clear **demonstration** (usually illustrated) of the reasoning process by which the mind infers the truth of the proposition from the truth of the facts in evidence.

3. A **conclusion,** consisting of a statement of the proposition proved.

In geometry, dealing as it does with exact materials, we see this process clearly in every theorem, no matter how difficult. In argumentation, dealing with human affairs in all their complexities and imperfections, we do not see it so clearly, but it is there just the same. There can be no true argumentation without it. In every piece of sound argumentation we have:

1. The materials of proof, generally spoken of as the **evidence.**

2. The process of proof, or demonstration, generally spoken of as the **argument.**

3. The **proposition** to be proved, which when proved becomes the **conclusion.**

The study of argumentation falls naturally into three parts:

1. Analysis: the study of **propositions,** and of the issues involved in them.
2. The study of **evidence.**
3. The study of **argument.**

In geometry there is very little need of **analysis** in the sense here intended; the proposition is by pre-arrangement simple and definite; there is only one issue, and that is the proposition itself. But in argumentation the proposition is apt to be complex, and is almost sure to be obscured by masses of contentious discussion most of which has really nothing to do with the case. Before one argues he must find out exactly what he is arguing about, and to do so he must analyze. He must examine the history of the question, including the immediate cause of discussion; he must determine what the proposition really is; he must see where the burden of proof lies; he must consider what others have said for and against the proposition; he must sift this material out, eliminating what is irrelevant, what is admitted by both sides, and what he is willing to grant; and he must find the **issues** — that is, those points in the proposition which the affirmative must prove in order to establish a case. Finally, he must determine upon which of those issues to stake his own case.

This, in one paragraph, is the problem of analysis, a problem demanding months of careful study. The importance of it will be seen in the fact that some cases practically prove themselves when once clearly analyzed. I think I can say without fear of contradiction that failure to analyze correctly occasions more disasters to student speeches than failure to argue plausibly.

The second study, that of **evidence**, is no less extensive, but in a way it can be summed up in a single principle: **No statement may be offered as evidence of the truth of something else unless it is itself acceptable as true**; acceptable to **the person to be convinced**, not merely to the speaker.

In geometry one may use as evidence only axioms, postulates, and previously proved propositions.

In argumentation one may use only axiomatic assertions, or assertions which, like postulates, are acceptable as true, or statements previously proved or which the speaker is prepared to prove and does prove immediately. To use as evidence a statement that does not satisfy this rule is to build the structure of the argument on sand; sound reasoning from unsound premises is utterly valueless.

Given evidentiary statements which are acceptable as true, there still remains the question of their relative weight. Some kinds of evidence are more convincing than others. On this subject much may be learned from the practice of the courts, in which certain classes of evidence — such as "hearsay evidence" — are barred as untrustworthy; and in which certain other classes — such as undesigned testimony, and testimony given against the interests of the witness — are considered especially weighty. The student will find the chapter on evidence in almost any text-book on argumentation a piece of very fascinating reading.

The third study is the study of the reasoning process itself; the study of argument. It is here that logic plays a part — or ought to. Unfortunately many students of logic seem to think of it as a pleasant game of charts on paper; something to amuse like a Chinese puzzle, or to develop the intellect, like chess. It never occurs to them that the syllogism is anything real; it would surprise them to be told that they use syllogisms every day.

The **syllogism**, technicalities aside, is simply the basic form of deductive reasoning. All reasoning is either **inductive** or **deductive**; that is, it is either a generalization from particular premises, or a particular application of a general premise. The syllogism consists of the general premise, plus a particular premise defining the particular application, plus a conclusion stating the particular truth derived; all of which is perfectly simple and clear if the student does not get panicky and try to memorize it.

The chief danger of error in **inductive** reasoning is the danger of too hasty or too careless a generalization; in ordinary English we call it " jumping to conclusions," and everybody does it, more or less.

The chief danger in **deductive** reasoning is the danger of committing one of the many well-known fallacies to which the syllogism so easily lends itself. No one who wishes to influence others through speaking can afford to be ignorant of these fallacies. " Begging the question," " illicit major," " undistributed middle," " argumentum ad hominem" — these are not fanciful terms invented by the teacher to play with in the classroom; these are real errors in thought which one hears all about him in the trolley-cars and on the street-corners, and some of which every student of public speaking commits almost every time he opens his mouth. The mistake most students make is in supposing that errors in reasoning are easy to see and easy to avoid, and that all one needs is a little common sense. On the contrary, they are often plausible, tricky, and deceiving, and more than a match for "common" sense, which is, of course, a very poor sort of sense. What is needed is *un*common sense — *good* sense in the superlative degree — backed by a thorough knowledge of the wiles of fallacious reasoning.

One reason why the student should not neglect the study of argumentation is that it has some of the qualities of a boomerang. If you do not hit the other fellow with it it will come back and hit you. Once you have essayed to influence others by reasoning with them you must carry it through successfully, or the reaction will more than wipe out your advantage. It will leave your audience more thoroughly convinced than ever that they are right and you are wrong. Conviction that does not convince is even worse than persuasion that does not persuade.

The student must bear in mind, also, that argumentation is not confined to formal debates, or even to speeches which as a whole have conviction as their purpose. In the ordinary give-and-take of all kind of speeches there is continual argumentation, even though much of it is concealed. The speaker is being constantly required to answer the unspoken question and refute the unspoken objection as it occurs; to argue his way as he goes. To do so successfully he has just as much need of sound reasoning processes as he could possibly have in formal debate.

CHAPTER X

DRIFT

IN THIS chapter and the next we have to consider two very practical problems of personality and method as well as of principle. These have to do with the qualities of drift and humor in public speaking.

No comment is more often heard in criticism of a speaker than the simple question, "What is he driving at?"

Failure of the speaker to make his drift clear may arise from any one, or any combination, of a number of causes:

1. It may arise from an actual lack of unity in the subject matter. The speaker may really be talking about several different things without any very clear idea as to which is the main thing.

2. It may arise from vagueness of purpose on the part of the speaker. He may have a unified subject, but no clear concept of what he is trying to do to his audience. This is one of the commonest causes. When I have occasion to ask a student speaker what he is driving at it is very seldom indeed that he

answers me with a statement of purpose.[1] When purpose is uppermost in a speaker's mind he generally manages to make his drift clear.

3. It may arise from the failure of the speaker to define his subject at the beginning, when the obscurity or complexity of the subject makes such definition necessary.

4. It may arise from incoherence. The speaker may have a single purpose and single subject, but may so bungle the construction and arrangement of his speech that one finds it impossible to follow him.

5. It may arise from poor emphasis; that is, he may have his leading thoughts buried in inconspicuous places, or he may present them without sufficient heightening of manner, and so encourage his audience to miss everything of importance and to puzzle over the trifles.

6. It may arise from too much abstraction, and too little concreteness.[2]

7. It may arise from a lack of climax; that is, the speaker may have failed to arrange his thoughts in the order of increasing importance up to the point at which he is ready to begin his conclusion.

8. It may arise from monotony. When a speaker lacks variety in pitch, force, or tempo, or in manner, it is easy for the listener to fall into the hypnotic state previously described,[3] and in that state he naturally loses the drift of the discourse.

9. It may arise from over-glibness on the part of the speaker; words flow from him so freely that the

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[1] See Chapter III.

[2] See Chapter VI.

[3] See Chapter V.

audience is nearly drowned in the torrent, and loses all sense of direction.

10. It may arise from the speaker's own vagueness or uncertainty of mind, whether real or apparent; the speaker will seem to be feeling his way, hesitatingly, and with no firm grip on himself. The audience soon catches his spirit, wonders what he is driving at, and wonders if he knows.

11. It may arise from insufficient reinforcement of ideas, so that points essential to an understanding of the speaker's drift are constantly escaping the audience.[1]

12. Besides all of these fairly obvious causes, and many others, it may arise, and often does arise, from a much more subtile cause. The speaker himself may not feel sufficiently the *need* of making his drift clear. He may know his subject and his purpose well enough; his speech may have a coherence and an emphasis that would be perfectly apparent in a stenographic report; he may be making plentiful use of concrete illustrations, with variety and interest at all points; he may — on paper — have perfect structure and climax, each idea having a function in contributing to the main thought, with the threads drawn together perfectly at the end; and still people may be yawning all through his speech and saying, "Well . . . what is he driving at?"

The fact is that there are ways and means of conveying ideas — or not conveying them — too subtile for analysis. What is on the speaker's mind somehow gets to the audience, though his words may not

[1] See Chapter VII.

exactly convey it. If he allows his mind to wander from its main course, to stop and play with ideas by the way, to over-elaborate minor points, or to dwell upon himself, even though nothing he does is very wrong, his audience will sense the state of his mind, and will lose consciousness of his drift, just as he does. But if he keeps constantly aware of his own objective, and alive to the necessity of having his audience follow him, he is very likely to make them feel the drift as they should.

Students are often troubled by this idea of drift, confusing it with such things as unity, or climax. One will say, when I ask him what he is driving at: "Well, if I tell you now there will be nothing left to say at the end. I might as well stop speaking." It seems to him that he should keep something back in order to preserve the suspense. So he should. But the audience does not ask to have everything told at once; it does not want the conclusion at the beginning. That is not what I mean by drift. The audience merely wants to be kept aware that there *is* a conclusion, and that things are drawing towards it, and that everything is contributing to it and bringing it nearer. There is no anti-climax in that.

Another student, having finished his speech and having been accused of lack of drift, will point out that everything in the speech really did contribute to the conclusion, and that he brought it all together in the end. But that is unity, not drift. Drift is not a matter of retrospect; it is something the listener wants to feel every minute of the time. Though hard to define, it is easy to feel — when it is there. When it is not, everybody squirms and murmurs, "What is he driving at?"

CHAPTER XI

HUMOR

IT WOULD be impossible for the public speaker to take his task too seriously, but it is quite possible for him to take it too soberly; and he generally does.

A student may be known at home as the village cut-up, and keep everybody in gales of laughter whenever he is out in company; but when he rises to speak before his classmates in college he behaves more like the village undertaker.

There seems to be a popular delusion to the effect that one must suppress the temptation to be humorous in order to appear dignified. It rests, of course, on a misconception of humor; people think of humor as something frivolous, even a little cheap, and are rather ashamed to give way to it. Those who make a habit of indulging in the cheapest types of humor in private are most apt to feel that way about it; they are unable to conceive of such a thing as dignified humor, being so used to the undignified kind.

The really humorous speaker who keeps his audiences chuckling, yet at the same time earnestly appreciative, is generally found to be a quiet soul in private life, incapable of ribald jest.

True humor is hard to define. Most people agree that it is something deeper than mere wit, or mere horseplay; that it is closely allied to pathos; that it is universal and human; that it is rather a matter of attitude than of things. One may drag in a joke, and perhaps raise a laugh, yet fail utterly of being humorous; on the other hand one may talk sincerely of serious things with just a little whimsical, individual twist, and have his audience laughing and crying at the same time.

The most popular definition of humor is that which links it with a sense of incongruity. A sense of incongruity, in turn, must rest upon a sense of values, a sane, well-balanced appreciation of the fitness of things — the truest and rarest sort of wisdom.

If this seems too broad a statement, think how many wise thoughts have been expressed with a touch of humor, and how many humorists have been rated as prophets in their wisdom. Dickens, Lincoln, and Mark Twain — to take three very different types — were all consistent humorists;

and all three were philosophers, preachers, and practical reformers. Dickens wrote of the follies and the crimes of his day with a humor that ranged from the most genial to the most bitter, and he struck those follies and crimes a telling blow. Lincoln told diabolically funny stories to illustrate his most determined opinions; he was the greatest master of parable since Christ, and his parables were nearly always amusing. And Mark Twain, kindly creator of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, has been called the most relentless and dangerous enemy of popular sham in recent generations.

Nobody expects the college student of public speaking to display the mature, well-balanced humor of a Dickens or a Mark Twain. But there is no reason why he shouldn't at least be his natural self.

Watch a group of students conversing in club or fraternity rooms, or in the library, or on the athletic field, or in the classroom before the lecture, and you will see plenty of smiles and hear occasional bursts of laughter — even though you know them to be discussing matters that they take quite seriously. But watch any one of the same group doing his turn in the public speaking class, or taking part in a debate, and see the difference! I have seen men who joked with Death in 1918 frown and scowl painfully over something no more serious than the tariff, or the evils of co-education. They have a sense of humor, unquestionably, — a sense of humor that would not yield to the horrors of war; but it yields most ingloriously to a little self-consciousness.

Occasionally, to be sure, a daring student does come along and upset tradition by introducing a little humor into his speeches — not so much because of an inner urge as because he has been told that it is a good thing and is willing to try anything once. Generally he pursues the wrong course: he introduces the humor in order to be humorous, not in order to be clear, or natural, or illuminating. The result is that his humorous effort appears to be dragged in by the heels. The jokes may be funny, but they are irrelevant; they exist as jokes, for their own sake, but they interrupt the flow of thought, and hinder more than they help. Moreover, the jokes themselves, introduced in this way for mere effect, are apt to seem strained, because the speaker, sensing their artificiality, becomes self-conscious about them and tells them badly, struggling hard to be funny and generally overdoing it to the point of being painful.

The kind of humor that is really worth while is the kind that grows naturally out of the thought — is a part of the thought, not a piece of foreign matter. As I have already said, it is not matter at all, but manner; it is the speaker's attitude towards the matter; his angle of vision; his appreciation of the incongruities he observes. He may introduce a humorous anecdote to illustrate a point, but unless he has first felt the potential humor *in* the point his illustration is in great danger of seeming far-fetched. The most genuine and most effective humor in public speaking is that which manifests itself not so much in humorous stories and examples as in spontaneous twists of phraseology and flashes of imagination, and in a lively sense of connotation. The true humorist does not always have to drag in humorous anecdotes to illustrate his points: he is able to see that his points (or some of them) *are* humorous — that there are elements of incongruity in them that can be brought out. When he does use illustrations he is often able to do so by means of quick similes and metaphors instead of roundabout stories; he uses the word "like" for a connective instead of a long palaver to the effect that "This reminds me of a story I once heard about a man who . . ." and so on. He does not hesitate to cite real particular instances in order to illustrate a general truth, but he is very sparing indeed of far-fetched analogies and elaborate parallels intended to be merely funny.

Is it possible to learn to be humorous? Yes and no. It is not possible for a person born obtuse, with no sense of values or relationships in life; nor is it possible for one who is congenitally ill-natured and intolerant. But for a normal human being, which means a human being with some sense of humor in him, it is quite possible. It is a question of bringing out what is there. Often self-consciousness is the chief obstacle; sometimes there is failure to observe and understand other people. Experience, study, and analysis will do much to remove both of these difficulties.

There are certain well-known elements of humorous appeal which are universal enough to justify serious study. Among them may be mentioned:

1. **The trivial, but spectacular, mishap.** People of any nation or degree of civilization will laugh when a fat man slips on the ice. But their reactions afterwards will vary; and nothing will offend people of good taste more quickly than an over-indulgence in this sort of humor. Their disapproval is not merely objective: it is temperamental; they are ashamed of themselves for being caught laughing at such horseplay. But the fact that they do laugh indicates the universality of the appeal; and it is perfectly possible to utilize this element with sufficient restraint and originality to avoid offense.

2. **The downfall of false dignity,** as when a snob in a tall silk hat runs afoul of a snowball fight. These two elements are often associated, and some of the funniest scenes on the stage and screen as well as some of the funniest stories are dependent upon them. Both are subject to the same limitations, and provoke the same reaction of disgust when carried to the point of vulgarity or when repeated too often. The throwing of custard pies is no longer amusing to persons of ordinary maturity and decency, although it may still be used to entertain the children and the feeble-minded.

3. **Exaggeration,** or **hyperbole.** Not all exaggeration is humorous: often it is merely prevaricatious. But there is a way of exaggerating things with the tongue in the cheek which puts no false values on them, but rather serves to emphasize their real value by contrast. There is a fictional element in such exaggeration which is a strong stimulant to the imagination. Much of the humor of Mark Twain is based upon exaggeration; he will so over-state a

truth as to make it outrageously absurd, yet somehow the truth is not lost. One laughs at his grotesque statement that he has seen at least a barrel of nails "from the true Cross" in the churches of Europe; but one does not miss the vital fact that somewhere somebody is shamming.

4. **Paradox.** The paradox has been defined by G. K. Chesterton, one of its greatest masters, as "the truth stood on its head to attract attention." It is a statement of thought by seemingly irreconcilable opposites, usually followed by explanation. Not all paradoxes are humorous, but the humorous paradox is one of the most effective.

5. **Irony, or sarcasm,** which is closely allied to the paradox in that it involves opposite statements; irony, however, implies an element of criticism which is not necessarily found in the paradox, and the opposition of statement is real rather than merely apparent. Paradox is a matter of form and irony a matter of intention. It is really paradoxical to say that "prohibition does not prohibit"; it is perhaps ironical to say that it does.

6. **Parody;** the presentation of absurd matter in serious form, particularly in imitation of the form of a serious thing already familiar, for purposes of burlesque. Almost every well-known poem has been parodied many times. Poe's "Annabel Lee" for example has been imitated with marvelous fidelity to rhyme and meter in a set of nonsense verses entitled "The Cannibal Flea."

7. **Travesty;** the opposite of parody, consisting of serious matter presented in comic or degraded form. Parody and travesty are seldom carefully distin-

guished, and the terms are generally used loosely and interchangeably.

8. **Satire;** the comic treatment of a folly or abuse for purposes of ridicule; it may employ the methods of parody or travesty, but with an ironical and critical intention, an element of attack, not found in pure parody. It may be gentle or it may be severe, but the moment it becomes ill-natured and intolerant it ceases to be humorous. Generally, also, it ceases to be very useful to the public speaker.

9. **Grotesquery;** the distortion of natural objects in fanciful or bizarre ways for humorous effect. Like satire it ceases to be humorous when it becomes ill-natured, and the only reaction it provokes is disgust. It is seen at its worst in the cartoons of Germany, Sweden, and Spain; compare them with those of *Punch* or *Life*, or with the good-humored comics of Fontaine Fox, and you cannot miss the difference. Good-natured grotesquery has a universal appeal, witness the popularity of the Sunday newspaper comics, which often have nothing else to recommend them.

10. **Irreverence.** American humor, particularly, is irreverent in spirit, not necessarily to the point of being blasphemous or offensive, but sufficiently to produce slight shocks and thrills; it is especially irreverent of custom, tradition, and secular authority. America began with rebellion against authority, and has been more or less steadily engaged in it ever since; and the American people take a more exquisite delight in outraging authority than any other people — bar the Irish, to whom authority means England. And when a humorist can couple daring irreverence

with a genuine attack on sham, as Mark Twain did, he is likely to be popular in America, at least.

11. **Tolerance.** True humor is tolerant, although a spirit of tolerance is not inconsistent with vigorous attack. One may disapprove tolerantly; he may be merciless in his ridicule of human behavior, yet tolerant of the human being whose behavior he attacks. Scathing wit does not appeal; it may make an audience laugh, but it hardens them. It does not win sympathy for the speaker or his views; it may even win sympathy for his victim. The humor that laughs *with*, rather than *at* somebody is the kind that really counts.

12. **Individuality.** The very word *humor* once meant "individual bent, or trait of character." It is the little differences between individuals and individual points of view that make the incongruities of life and thought. He who would be truly humorous must be humorous in his own way. Not by imitating others, but by developing himself, will he learn the secret of genuine humor.

Such are the commonest elements of humorous appeal. The list is not complete, and, I confess, not very homogeneous, but it may be useful in a purely suggestive way.

A little study of these elements will show the speaker that there is a common denominator, — namely, **incongruity.** As I have already said, a real sense of incongruity rests upon a sense of values. The speaker's task, therefore, is not merely to provide himself with a stock of jokes to draw upon. It is rather to educate himself to a keen sense of the fitness of things and a lively appreciation of the incongruities out of which jokes are made. By this means he will learn to see the potential humor in his own thought processes, and to enliven them in a way that is really his own.

The speaker who has accomplished this has better equipped himself not only to deliver prepared speeches, but also to meet successfully the conditions of extemporaneous speaking; for a ready flow of genuine humor is the surest and best means of meeting many of the emergencies that are constantly arising — interruptions, accidents, heckling, and so on — and almost the only means of meeting determined hostility. One of the most famous speeches of all time — the Liverpool Speech of Henry Ward Beecher[1] — illustrates admirably the extent to which this is true. In his attempt to deliver that speech Beecher faced an audience that had come purposely to drive him from the platform. With unconquerable good nature and unfailing sense of humor he fenced and parried with his audience for an hour, meeting every emergency as it arose and compelling them to laugh with him, until at last he won himself a hearing.

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[1] See "The World's Great Orations," Vol. X.

A speaker who can do that will never be disconcerted when the lights unexpectedly go out, or a drunken man grows troublesome, or the audience develops an unexpected reaction. But he cannot laugh down the tribulations of the speaker unless he is accustomed to laughing down the tribulations of the man.

CHAPTER XII

VOCABULARY

IT IS often said that the "tools" of speech are **words, tones, and actions**; and the student may be wondering why I have postponed discussing these things so long. The reason is that while extremely important they are not fundamental. Good tools are always an asset; but they do not make a speaker any more than they make a carpenter or a dentist. One may have a beautiful voice, graceful gestures, and a superb command of the language, and yet be a hollow, artificial, insincere, and ineffective speaker; on the other hand one may be a surprisingly effective speaker in spite of a poor voice or awkward gestures. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, was a tremendously powerful speaker, though his gestures were monotonous and his voice shrill. He had something to say and a sincere, vigorous way of saying it, and such a man will be listened to whether his tools of speech are in perfect condition or not.

But this is no argument in favor of poor tools. He who would do his own best must strive persistently to perfect his voice, gestures, and command of language, to the end that they may become, not his masters, but his good and faithful servants. In this and the next two chapters are set down a few facts concerning these tools which may at least help to start the student on the right sort of self-training.

The command of language that a speaker needs is so largely a matter of his general education and of his training in composition and literature that it need not be fully covered here. But there are certain special problems of language which confront the speaker as distinguished from the writer, and these are properly our province. Some of them have already been discussed in connection with Concreteness, Reinforcement, and Drift; others will be considered later in connection with Methods of Preparation. One problem, however, merits separate consideration — the problem of **vocabulary.**

Vocabulary, in the larger sense, includes phraseology as well as diction; it is the sum total of language material.

When a student talks fluently but incorrectly, using ungrammatical constructions and barbarisms of speech, it is evident that the fault lies with his general education. His only remedy is more schooling, more reading, more association with educated people. He needs vocabulary building by all means, but from the inside out — ideas as well as words. His difficulty is not specifically a matter of public speaking. If he is sensible enough to realize his deficiency at all he is not generally puzzled as to its nature.

But often a student comes to me whose difficulty is quite different from this. His general education and environment have been good, he perhaps writes very well, and he seldom offends by vulgarities of speech; yet he is troubled on the platform by a failure of words. He stumbles, hesitates, and in desperation uses words and phrases that are painfully clumsy and inadequate. He knows they are inadequate, and his listeners know that he knows; yet he seems perfectly helpless. His vocabulary seems to be unequal to the expression of his thoughts.

He will come to me afterwards, disgusted with himself. "I can't understand it," he says; "I know what I want to say, but when I get up there the words won't come. I could sit down and write it easily enough, and never be troubled for words, but on the platform I get all fussed and rattled, and can't think of the right words to save me. What's the matter with me, anyway?"

Sometimes the matter is partly nervousness or self-consciousness occasioned by some misconception of the speaker's task, and always this may be a contributing cause. But the matter is chiefly a faulty **speaking vocabulary.**

The student may think himself fairly well equipped with words because he can write. What he fails to understand is that the writing vocabulary is one thing and the speaking vocabulary another.

There are really four vocabularies — a **reading vocabulary,** a **writing vocabulary,** a **hearing vocabulary,** and a **speaking vocabulary** — almost as distinct as four different languages. One may know four different languages, but know some of them better than others; and one may be able to translate better from, say, French into English, than from English into French.

Of the four vocabularies — reading, writing, hearing, speaking — the first two are bound up with the visual sense, the last two with the auditory. The reading and hearing vocabularies are receptive, or sensory; the writing and speaking are active, or motor. The reading and hearing involve actual sensations and the memory; the writing and speaking involve kinesthetic sensations and the imagination.

The four do not develop simultaneously, and are not constant in their relative proportions. The hearing vocabulary develops first; the child learns to understand words before it learns to speak them. The speaking vocabulary is a close second, and develops in intimate relationship with the hearing vocabulary through the years of liveliest curiosity and keenest imitative sense — the years when a child repeats aloud each new word that it hears. But it never quite catches up to the hearing vocabulary.

The reading and writing vocabularies simply do not exist at first, even after the other two are well developed. They begin with schooling. At first they develop together, and indeed are almost identical; but from the time when the child first begins to read for himself the reading vocabulary begins to outstrip the writing, and the gap gradually widens. At the same time these two vocabularies rapidly begin to overtake the hearing and speaking vocabularies, and by the time the child is half-way through the grammar school they have far outstripped them. In persons of considerable education the reading vocabulary may be two or three times as large as the hearing vocabulary, and the writing may be ten times as large as the speaking.

It is the last fact that may account for our friend's predicament. He may have a large writing vocabulary (as well as a large reading one), but his speaking vocabulary may be small. In ordinary conversation he does not notice it because one uses a very small vocabulary anyhow in conversation; but when he attempts to speak on more formal occasions, making larger demands upon his supply of words, the words simply won't come. He knows them, in the sense that he could use them easily enough in writing, but they do not come to his tongue and lips because he is not accustomed to speaking them out loud; he has no kinesthetic realization of those words, that is, he does not know how it *feels* to utter them.

The extent to which this discrepancy prevails is well illustrated when students of composition are asked to read their own themes aloud. Time and again they come upon words that they have used themselves, and used correctly, but which they are utterly unable to pronounce. A cynic might blame this difficulty on the popular habit of stealing themes instead of writing them; but he would be less than half right. I have repeatedly found students unable to pronounce words that they used freely and habitually in their daily writings; and I have seen them very much astonished to discover their inability. It had never occurred to them to be curious about the sounds of the words; their association was entirely with the visual sense, not the auditory. The two are in different worlds.

Given a deficiency in any one of the four vocabularies, there are three ways of going about removing it:

1. By increasing all the vocabularies.
2. By widening the channels of association between them.
3. By adding directly to the deficient one.

The four vocabularies might be compared to four tanks containing unequal quantities of heavy oil, and having very narrow connecting passages, allowing only a slight leakage from the higher levels to the lower. If no oil were added, the four bodies would eventually find a common level; but if oil were added often and in proportionate quantities the leakage would not be sufficient to overcome the inequalities, and some tanks would retain a higher level than others.

Obviously, a low level in any one tank could be raised by increasing the quantity of oil in the others, and consequently the pressure at which the leakage took place; or by widening the connecting passages; or by pouring oil directly into the tank concerned.

In the normally educated person of college age or thereabouts the level is highest in the reading vocabulary, and lowest in the speaking. But the passage between these two is the narrowest, because the association is the least direct; one is sensory and visual, the other motor and auditory. The widest passages are those between the two visual vocabularies and between the two auditory.

Keeping this analogy in mind the student should endeavor to analyze his own difficulties, and to remedy them in accordance with the suggestions given. Any exercise that will put words directly into the deficient vocabulary, or that will increase the association between that vocabulary and the others, or that will substantially increase the pressure in the others, will be beneficial.

For the improvement of a deficient speaking vocabulary the best exercise I know is thoughtful, wide-awake reading aloud, because:

1. It fills up the reading vocabulary faster even than silent reading, for one must read all the words instead of just "skimming"; and this increases the pressure in the largest tank.
2. It increases the association between the reading and speaking vocabularies, thus widening the most important channel of leakage.
3. It puts words directly into the speaking vocabulary, since the reader actually speaks each new word on first acquaintance, instead of merely hearing it or looking at it. By reading from many different authors with different vocabularies he can make this process very rapid.

The second best exercise, not always so readily available, but never to be neglected when the opportunity affords itself, is conversation with well-educated people, because:

1. It re-stimulates the imitative process of childhood; one hears others using good words and strives to do likewise.
2. It fills up the hearing vocabulary, from which words leak most easily into the speaking vocabulary.

The third best exercise is the habit of reading aloud whatever one writes, because:

1. It increases the association between the writing and speaking vocabularies, utilizing the two motor impulses in common.

2. It increases the association between the reading and speaking vocabularies, in some measure at least.

3. It strengthens the connection between the writer's own thought processes and the kinesthetics of speech.

Better than any one of these exercises is the judicious use of all three, under which a poor speaking vocabulary can hardly fail to improve. But in the performance of any or all of them it must be borne in mind that no good is accomplished by gazing at an unfamiliar word, wondering what it means and how to pronounce it, and then passing it up. The student will never get anywhere unless he is willing to *look in the dictionary* now and then and learn something for himself. A student who hasn't ambition enough to provide himself with a good dictionary and use it is a "weak sister," and the sooner somebody tells him so the better.

CHAPTER XIII

VOICE

LUCKY is the speaker who possesses a good voice, whether he got it by accident of birth, or by virtue of careful training in childhood. Not that the good voice will in any sense make him a good speaker — I cannot repeat too often that it will do nothing of the sort — but that it will save him a great deal of bother and worry that would otherwise steal time from more important things.

For the singer, of course, voice is paramount. He must begin early and build constructively for many years, not merely to escape faults, but to realize positive beauties of voice for the interpretation of music. A good speaking voice, however, is not necessarily beautiful in this sense. It should be sufficiently so, of course, to fall pleasantly rather than unpleasantly on the ear. It should be free of such abuses as nasality, harshness, and extremes of pitch, because these things distract and annoy the audience, but it need not be surpassingly melodious. It should be flexible and responsive enough to convey the feelings of the speaker, but it need not be capable of operatic pyrotechnics. The chief requirements are that it shall be loud enough and clear enough to reach a large audience easily, that it shall be free of all distracting qualities whether good or bad in themselves, that it shall be accompanied by distinct articulation, and that it shall be so naturally produced as to withstand fatigue.

Nature has given each normal human being the makings of a reasonably good voice, and practically every failure to realize such a voice is traceable to abuse of some kind. If human beings lived natural animal lives there would be little need for voice training, and none for voice correction, except as the result of physical accident. But we do not lead natural lives. We live indoors instead of out, breathing dust, gas, and carbon dioxide instead of pure air; we wear foolish clothes and abuse our stomachs, subjecting ourselves to catarrh, laryngitis, and bronchitis; we spoil our natural habits of breathing by squeezing ourselves with belts, vests or corsets, and by sitting long hours in cramped and unnatural positions; and we impose upon ourselves — and our children — all sorts of artificial restraints and constraints in the use of the voice under the guise of social propriety.

The wonder is not that some voices are poor in quality or tire easily; the wonder is that people of college age or older have any voices left. That they have is simply due to the marvelous persistence of Nature in claiming and reclaiming her own. Give her half a chance and she will set things right even after appalling abuse.

For the public speaking student of college age voice training is not a matter of creating something artificial that did not exist before. It is a matter of correcting such abuses as have arisen and restoring the natural voice; and with a few fortunate individuals it is not even that.

Problems of voice include those of **breathing, vocalization,** and **articulation.** The latter, being acquired through civilization, is perhaps not a matter of voice in the physiological sense, but it is most conveniently studied in connection with voice.

Of breathing and vocalization it can be positively said that the correct method is the natural method. But what is the natural method? The only way to find out is to observe the behavior of the only truly natural people in the world: the children.

When a child feels the impulse to shout, his mouth and throat open wide, he sucks in a full breath, and he shouts. He puts his whole body into the effort, and for that reason he seems to feel no effort. There is no special strain in any one place. His breathing may be diaphragmatic, or abdominal — most teachers of voice insist that correct breathing is abdominal — but he is no more conscious of his abdomen or his diaphragm (of which he has never heard) than he is of his femurs when he runs. What is more important, he is entirely unconscious of his *throat;* no matter how loud he shouts and screams it never seems to feel uncomfortable to him, simply because his throat is quite relaxed and free from strain.

We marvel at the child's power to keep up the screaming and shouting all day with no apparent effect except physical fatigue. When we grown-ups shout a little we generally grow quite hoarse; and even without shouting, many of us who have to talk every day manage to maintain chronic cases of "clergymen's sore throat." We can be reasonably sure that most of the children will eventually acquire the same difficulties.

When does the change begin? It begins when we first say to the child in defense, not of his voice, but of our own civilized nerves: "Sh! Don't scream so! You will ruin your voice. You must learn to talk quietly and politely." The child instantly becomes conscious of his voice — for the first time. Instead of producing it naturally he now assumes a strained, artificial tone, restricting his breath, and constricting his throat. Through years of such treatment he goes on to develop a voice that is perhaps soft and polite in conversation, but that is produced at the cost of unnatural breathing and throat constriction. Then when he wants to use his voice more freely and vigorously, as in addressing a large audience, he cannot do so; he has forgotten how, and only succeeds in straining himself and going hoarse.

When a person has got into such a state there is only one way to get out. He must take himself in hand and correct the faulty habit. Most people are terribly afraid of habit; they would rather remain slaves to it than endure the hardship of fighting it, for in the early stages a fight with habit undoubtedly requires determination and hard work. But with intelligence and perseverence it is really much easier to change a habit than most people suppose, and the farther you go the easier it gets.

The first step, naturally, is to find out what is wrong. It is surprising how many people seem perfectly willing to omit that step, and to go floundering around wasting time and effort to no purpose. Success in fighting habit rests upon clear and careful analysis of the situation, followed by concentration of effort. A physician usually makes some sort of an attempt to find out what is wrong with a patient before he prescribes a remedy; he doesn't start with the assumption that the patient has every disease there is and prescribe the whole pharmacopoeia. But I have often known a teacher of "expression" to prescribe a whole chapter of vocal exercises to an entire class, and hold daily drills with military uniformity and precision. Fortunately, vocal exercises are not as dangerous as drugs, and the teacher, unlike the physician, is able to "get away with" this sort of treatment. Instead of killing his patients he merely makes them feel foolish, doing them very little injury, and perhaps even a little good. But he does not accomplish very much in the direction of correcting specific faulty habits in individual students; and the student will not accomplish very much for himself, with or without a teacher, unless his efforts are based upon a pretty accurate diagnosis of his particular needs.

The most serious vocal faults that I have found among students of college age or thereabouts are the following:

1. Faults in **breathing**
    a. Insufficient lung capacity, due usually to neglect of the habit of deep breathing.
    b. Breathlessness, due to the habit of speaking with the lungs nearly empty, and no breath reserve.
    c. Inadequate control of breath, due usually to some form of constriction that has resulted in a cramped habit of breathing.
    d. Fluttering, or temporary loss of control, due to nervousness.
2. Faults in **vocalization** (tone production)
    a. Breathiness; wasteful use of more breath than is necessary to produce a good tone, resulting in a thin, weak tone and in shortness of breath.
    b. Guttural placing; a habit of producing the tone too far back in the throat; usually associated with failure to open the mouth wide enough.
    c. Nasality; due sometimes to a habit of passing the air through the nose while speaking, and sometimes to complete or partial obstruc-

tion of the nasal and post-nasal cavities, interfering with head resonance. The latter is often a matter of growth or malformation, needing medical attention rather than vocal exercises.

d. Harshness; discord, due to the presence of disharmonic rather than harmonic overtones. Since the voice has a strong tendency to reflect the feelings this fault is most often found in irritable, or ill-natured, or ill-bred people. However, it is sometimes the result of disease, or merely of habit.

e. Faulty pitch; too low, or (more often) too high. Sometimes variable and uncertain. Often associated with harshness, and may be due to similar causes, or to an unmusical ear.

f. Flatness, or woodenness; due to a lack of sufficient resonance. Not so serious as some other faults, but limits the expressiveness of the voice, and makes it harder to hold sympathy and attention.

g. Monotony, when a matter of vocal habit, especially monotony of pitch. But monotony is more often a mental than a vocal fault.[1]

h. Hoarseness; a symptom of chronic vocal abuse; sometimes an obstinate habit, especially with those of German or Yiddish origin.

i. Tonelessness; a habit of speaking in consonants only, neglecting the vowels; of speaking in noises rather than tones.

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[1] See Chapter V; also page 108, this chapter.

3. Faults in **articulation**
   - a. Slovenly enunciation; plain, all-round carelessness in forming the sounds of speech. Very common.
   - b. "Mushy" enunciation; talking as if the mouth were full of mush. Due to physical causes such as too much or too little saliva; or to fatigue or brain fag; or to lack of flexibility in lips and tongue and jaws, with failure to open the mouth wide enough.
   - c. Slurring; failure to form clearly such sounds as seem a little hard, especially combinations of consonants like st, sp, pr, pt, kt, etc.; also final ng as in all present participles.
   - d. Habitual failure to finish sounds, especially final consonants like t, p, or k. Perhaps merely a form of slurring, but a specific national habit with Americans.
   - e. Habitual contraction of words and elision of syllables, as in "comp'ny" or "tell 'em."
   - f. Habitual insertion of extra vowels, as in "athaletics." When this and other faults of pronounciation are due to ignorance rather than habit they are matters of vocabulary rather than of voice.
   - g. Tongue-tie, lisping, or other speech impediments due to minor malformation. In all but extreme cases, however, they are bound up with habit, and will yield to exercises.
   - h. Stammering, stuttering, or other serious speech defects. These are usually due to mental, though often subconscious, causes, and are bound up with the emotional biog-

raphies of the victims. They seldom yield to simple exercises, but require expert treatment by trained speech-correctionists.

i. Habitual difficulty in enunciating certain sounds, due to foreign birth or environment. Common, and obstinate.

j. Mispronunciation of many kinds due to environment and habit.

k. Drawling; prolonging the vowels and mouthing the syllables. Very common with Southerners.

This is a very rough list, far from complete, and possibly not very scientific; but it does include all of the vocal faults that have come to my attention in class and that are serious enough to interfere with the effectiveness of the speaker. I set them down here by way of warning, and by way of help to the reader who must shift for himself. But the diagnosis of faults in the individual and the prescription of corrective exercises is properly the business of the teacher; or in the case of speech defects, the psychiatrist or the surgeon. A list of good corrective exercises will be found in Appendix A of this book, and from it the teacher may prescribe, or the student select, suitable treatment for the correction of any common fault that is a matter of habit. For the treatment of the more obstinate faults, particularly actual speech defects, the student will need expert help, and the teacher who is not himself a trained speech-correctionist should refer the student to some one who is.

With or without the assistance of a teacher, the student who would correct his vocal faults should remember one or two safe and sane principles:

1. Good voice production is natural, easy, painless. The presence of strain or pain is a sure sign of incorrect method.
2. In good voice production there may be violent muscular action in the region of the diaphragm, but the throat is open and relaxed, and the speaker is unconscious of its existence.
3. Nobody can breathe badly twenty-three hours a day and then breathe correctly at will for purposes of public speaking. Good breathing must be habitual.
4. All problems of forming or correcting habit turn upon the fact that habit is cumulative; that every time you win you strengthen the good habit, and every time you lose you strengthen the bad one.
5. A little regular practice at frequent intervals is better than sporadic orgies of practice.

Besides the common faults in voice production so far mentioned, there are some errors to be guarded against in the *use* of the voice. Some speakers with perfectly adequate voices do not speak loud enough, simply as a matter of habit, or of poor judgment. Others speak too loud. A few speakers play with their voices; they seem to enjoy the sound of their own inflections, and indulge in all sorts of vocal gymnastics whether called for by the thought or not. But by far the commonest fault in the use of the voice is **monotony.**

Monotony is simple lack of variety. It is possible to vary the voice in pitch, in force, or in tempo, and it is possible to be monotonous in any one of these elements, or in all three. Monotony of pitch is the most distressing form of monotony, but it is also the easiest to recognize and guard against; it is usually a matter of habit. Monotony of force is destructive to meaning and to climax, and generally arises from a lack of emphasis in the speaker's mind. Monotony of tempo, or pace, is the most insidious form of monotony, and the hardest to deal with; it is one of the last faults to yield to training, and as a rule it yields only to training. A really skilful use of variety in tempo is one of the marks of the finished speaker.

Most of the vocal faults which are pronounced enough to interfere with a speaker's effectiveness are also obvious enough to be easily recognized. There is nothing mysterious about them. They call for sane criticism and diagnosis, followed by regular hard work for a long period of time. You cannot reform twenty-year-old habits in twenty minutes — or twenty days. But with a correct diagnosis and reasonably persistent effort almost any bad habit can be overcome.

CHAPTER XIV

ACTION

THE eye is quicker than the ear, and hence a better road to primary attention. It is easier to keep awake at the "movies" than in church, quite regardless of the depth of one's religion. One has to use very little mental effort to watch a photoplay, even though there are few explanatory sub-titles; the visual sense is so much livelier than the auditory that one can relax, mentally and physically, and yet miss very little of what is going on.

People are actually more sensitive to what a speaker does than to what he says; and no doubt the tremendous vogue of the motion picture is intensifying this condition by training the public to read actions rather than words. But the strongest appeal, of course, lies in a harmonious combination of actions and words; which is why the spoken drama still remains a far more vital thing to those who patronize it than the motion picture can ever hope to be. The problem for the public speaker is to " suit the action to the word, the word to the action " ; to be neither a phonograph nor a windmill, but a natural, life-like human being.

Of late years there has been something of a prejudice against gesture in public speaking, occasioned no doubt by the absurdities and artificialities of gesture as taught in some of our elocution schools a few years ago, and employed more or less generally in church sociable " recitations " and high school declamations. People still remember with horror the base drum and semaphore arm movements with which a youthful " Spartacus " exhorted imaginary gladiators, to the delight of proud parents and the discomfort of embarrassed audiences. Better no gesture at all, they say, than gesture like that!

The trouble was that those gestures were unnatural; but it is not true, as some people seem to think, that all gesture is unnatural.

The small child uses plenty of gesture. He does more: he uses **action** in the broadest sense. He talks with his whole body — with his hands, arms, feet, head, face, mouth, eyes, eyebrows, shoulders, and voice; and while certain high-strung persons may object that he is unrestrained, nobody ever accuses him of being unnatural.

The unnaturalness is acquired later. The child, having been taught to restrain his exuberance, becomes quiet, stiff, and unexpressive. He forgets how to make natural gestures, and does not make any; or he makes silly little abortive ones from the wrist or elbow, checking them before they can develop.

His case is not hopeless, for as I said in the last chapter Nature will do wonders in the effort to win back her own if you give her half a chance.

But the elocution-school method of gesture training did not give Nature half a chance. Natural gestures depend upon a highly complex but entirely subconscious coördination of mind and body; upon the " whole mechanism," as the psychologists call it, working without thought or effort, as in the case of the small child. The elocutionist sought to substitute for this subconscious coördination a conscious coördination learned by formal drill and applied from the outside. He classified and named the gestures, practiced them carefully, selected the proper ones for each declamation, and memorized them with the declamation — or more commonly afterwards. Of course this method never produced naturalness or sincerity. How could it?

" Ah! " says the elocutionist, " but it would if it were learned thoroughly, for Art conceals Art! "

Nothing can conceal that sort of art, not even the genius of a great artist. The saying was intended for the Fine Arts, and it means simply that good artistry is less obtrusive than clumsy artifice. But the Fine Arts are frankly arts, not realities; they do not ask or need concealment.

In a normal, natural, genuine function of life like public speaking, where everything is real, and where complete sincerity is the great virtue, you cannot plaster Art on from the outside and expect it to conceal the fact that it is Art. You cannot give an artistic imitation of public speaking and fool people — actually deceive them — into thinking it is real; not unless you are a born liar. The only technique than can possibly be helpful and at the same time sincere and genuine, is that which is developed from the inside out.

The speaker must have something to say. He must feel the urge to say it. And then he must yield not merely his voice but his whole body to the task of saying it.

The small child does so. Therefore it is natural.

If the older person tries to do so, and yet fails to get a natural response — if his body does not naturally and unconsciously perform the necessary actions — it is because he has in some way suppressed his body through restraint. His only recourse is to remove that restraint; to restore the responsiveness of his body by exercising it wisely; and then to forget his body again and think of what he has to say.

I have said that his case is not hopeless, that Nature will help him recover his childhood ability, or at least as much of it as he needs. How then shall he go about it? By way of answer I offer the following hints:

1. Let him strive in every possible way to increase the pressure from within; that is, to so concentrate his attention on what he has to say and the necessity of saying it that he will forget himself and burst the bonds of his self-restraint. He can do this best by engaging in arguments and discussions, by speaking of things he is really concerned about, by allowing himself to grow enthusiastic or angry. His teacher can help stimulate his enthusiasm by giving response to his thoughts and encouraging the discussion. Once the pressure becomes strong enough the speaker's body will respond by *some* kind of action, at least intended to be expressive.

2. When the action so developed *is* expressive, and when it does not distract or annoy his hearers, it is right; and it is the duty of the teacher to let him alone. Self-conscious attention to things that are right is just what must be avoided.

3. When the speaker's actions, though developed spontaneously from the thought, are inadequate or inexpressive because of his acquired inhibitions, the teacher can help by judicious criticism of the things that are wrong. If the student can be made conscious of his worst faults but unconscious of his successes — or rather of the means whereby he achieves success — the former will become uncomfortable and the latter comfortable, and he will eventually learn to follow the pleasanter path.

4. If the student is seriously and persistently awkward, he should strive to limber up his body through the medium of good exercises — fencing, boxing, medicine ball work, and setting-up exercises, including some good dancing steps. Such exercises, taken on the side, will do more to teach him gesture than all the gesture drill in the world.

5. If his chief difficulty is a strong aversion to gesturing at all, the same treatment will help; aided by the treatment prescribed to increase the pressure from within. But this fault is not so common as many believe, and is very rare in those who have got past the first difficulties of nervousness and have begun to "find themselves" on the platform.

Those who really have something to say and the urge to say it seldom have any other difficulty with action than the one that Theodore Roosevelt had; namely, a tendency to settle into one or two habits or mannerisms. In a young student this fault can readily be corrected if the teacher will subject him to judicious criticism in such a way as to make him self-conscious about his mannerisms but not about his really good gestures. The impulse from within will then be diverted from the mannerisms to the more genuinely expressive actions. The only danger is that the self-consciousness will be applied in the wrong place, and the good gestures checked; to guard against this the wise teacher criticizes external things sparingly, at the same time always emphasizing the thought.

When once the speaker has freed himself of his false mannerisms and acquired inhibitions, and has something urgent to say, he will say it, not alone with his voice, but with the expression of his face, with his eyes and eyebrows, with his shoulders, with the movements of his head and of his whole body, with changes of posture and position, with his feet, hands, and arms. And his audience will get what he has to say almost as much through his actions as through his words.

CHAPTER XV

METHODS OF PREPARATION

THE first questions a student of public speaking asks are, "What shall I talk about?" and "How shall I prepare?" I have deferred the answers until now because they depend in part upon the principles which we have been considering.

In general, the best answer I can give to the first question is, "Whatever you can best motivate," and I refer the student again to the discussion in Chapter IV.

It is all very well to say, "Choose something you know about, something that interests you, something that is appropriate to the occasion." That is just what the speaker outside of the classroom will try to do without being told. But it does not help the student with his speeches in class, because in the first place there isn't any particular occasion, and in the second place after he has addressed the same audience a number of times he begins to run out of topics that he is interested in and knows all about — or at any rate he thinks he is running out of them, which has the same effect.

In class most students show an almost irresistible tendency to choose informative topics, that is, topics upon which they can speak with an informative purpose. An informative purpose presupposes some motive of authority on the part of the speaker and some willingness to be informed on the part of the audience, both of which qualities are apt to be lacking in the routine work of an ordinary college class. But so easy is it for the student to fall back on some ready source of information like a magazine article, and then simply relay that information second hand, that the average student will do so rather than make the necessary effort to find well motivated topics. Then he struggles along in a hopeless effort to impart information that he really has not got to an audience that does not want it.

I have not said, please note, that a student should never speak informatively in class. I have merely stated the fact that most informative speeches are harder to motivate than speeches intended to impress, or convince, or actuate; and that a speech must be well motivated to be effective.

There are obviously two ways of motivating a class speech. One is to select a fool-proof topic that motivates itself; which is the hardest way, especially after the student has spoken many times. The other is to use a little imagination and ingenuity in order to motivate a topic that might not carry itself without. It may help somewhat if the student will bear in mind the following contributory elements of good motivation:

1. Evidence of inside, or first-hand, information on the part of the speaker, especially if rare or unusual.
2. Evidence of unusually broad and deep knowledge of the subject, giving the impression of authority.
3. Evidence of enthusiasm for the subject on the part of the speaker, tremendous and contagious.
4. Establishment of a bond of common interest in the subject, uniting speaker and audience; it may grow out of the nearness of the subject, or its universality, or the fact that it has been discussed before in the same company.
5. Evident timeliness of the subject; its obvious relation to some current situation or event.
6. Intrinsic interest of the subject, which I put last because it is the least reliable; intrinsic interest is not an absolute, but a relative thing, and many a student is fooled by that fact. However, allowing for the relativity, subjects do differ in degree of *probable* interest.

A thoughtful application of these principles should help the student — or the teacher — to pick out subjects suitable for classroom practice in public speaking. By way of supplement, however, I offer, in Appendix C, a list of topics that have been used successfully in class speeches, and that will serve as suggestive examples, if nothing more.

The second question, "How shall I prepare?" calls for a qualified answer. No system of preparation will do for every subject and every speaker.

The first steps, of course, are fairly obvious. One must master his subject himself before he can hope to present it to others. He must have something to say, and he must have a great deal more than he does say, else he will fail to show the necessary reserve power. All this means, usually, reading, study, and thought, followed by composition.

The best method ever devised for the gathering and ordering of material is the separate leaf method, whereby the speaker or writer takes his original notes on small slips of paper of uniform size, using a separate slip for each idea, and then assembles and arranges them after the manner of a game of solitaire. This method gives the greatest elasticity of rearrangement, permits easy addition and subtraction of material, and avoids duplication of effort. Experienced speakers and writers seldom use any other.

Apart from method, there is one principle which the speaker must observe in the preparation of material if he is to attain any measure of success, and that is the principle of thorough assimilation. The process of absorbing ideas is not unlike the digestive process. One first gathers articles of food (ideas) and puts them into his mouth (memory). The articles may be of many different kinds and from many different sources, but in the process of digestion they are gradually mixed and broken down through the agency of digestive fluids (mental associations and reactions), until they lose their original identity (authorship) and become a single homogeneous mass (composition). It is at this point — in the preparation of a speech — that most students stop; they have digested their thoughts but have not yet assimilated them. Food that is digested but not assimilated is simply foreign matter inside the body; it is not part of the man himself. So with thoughts. One may have studied them, mastered them, composed them; yet they are not one's own until they have been absorbed into the blood, so to speak; and they are not fit material for public speaking until they really are one's own.

Such are the inescapable first steps of preparation. "But," says the student, "how shall I prepare my thoughts for *delivery?* Shall I write them out and memorize them? Or shall I write an outline and memorize that? Or shall I use a few notes and speak extemporaneously?"

The answer is that he should use the method best adapted to himself and to the occasion. My advice is to try everything at least once; to experiment and choose the best; but to experiment intelligently, with due regard to the advantages and limitations of each method. Some of the more obvious of those advantages and limitations may be set down here by way of suggestion, and the student may find others for himself.

The advantages of **writing out and memorizing** a speech are:

1. It gives the best control over details of language.
2. It permits economy of expression, the elimination of dead wood.
3. It insures the speaker against leaving out im-

portant points, or forgetting what he intended to say —*provided, always, that the memory does not fail.*

4. It provides a correct text for record or publication.

The disadvantages are:

1. The tendency of a written speech to *sound* written; that is, for the writer to employ the construction and phraseology of written rather than spoken English — his writing rather than his speaking vocabulary.[1] Few students realize how different written and spoken English really are, not only in vocabulary but in construction and general style. Spoken language is less formal, less finished, less literary; it contains fewer complex and periodic sentences, but more simple and compound and loose sentences; it uses fewer strictly grammatical constructions and more purely idiomatic ones. It does not depend upon the written word alone, but leaves much to be conveyed by the inflections of the voice and the actions of the body.

2. The difficulty of thinking when one is so busy remembering; the audience feels and resents the substitution of a memory process for an active thinking process on the part of the speaker.

3. The unreliability of the memory, and the fact that when it fails unexpectedly one is stranded.

4. The simple fact that memorized speeches rarely show thorough assimilation.

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[1] See Chapter XII.

The advantages of **extemporaneous** speaking from notes or outline are:

1. It is spontaneous and genuine, even in its failures.

2. It sounds like speaking rather than reading.

3. It tends to make the speaker "think on his feet" instead of trying to remember what he thought yesterday or the day before.

4. It permits of instantaneous modification or adaptation to meet unexpected conditions.

The **disadvantages** are:

1. The tendency of many speakers to ramble, wasting time and words to no purpose.

2. The difficulty of being sure that nothing is left out in the excitement; that the speaker has really said what he intended to say.

3. The clumsiness and uncertainty of extemporaneous language.

4. The temptation to neglect preparation and depend on one's "gift of gab."

5. The absence of a text for record or publication.

6. The difficulty of keeping within the time limit when there is one — a very vital matter, about which most students are all too careless. To be cut off before one has reached his climax, or to be forced to make a hasty, lame ending, is to have one's speech utterly ruined; and there are many occasions in real life when one is allowed only so many minutes to speak.

It is clear that many of the advantages and disadvantages of both methods are conditional; that modification of method may increase or decrease them. Most speakers have found that some sort of a compromise is the best solution. For example, one well known speaker prepares by actually delivering his speech orally and extemporaneously to an imaginary audience, not once, but many times, until he has it whipped into such shape as to remove many of the disadvantages of the extemporaneous method. Then he writes it down, polishes it with a blue pencil, and finally memorizes it — although by that time it needs very little memorization. Another uses the same method, but improves upon it by having a stenographer take the speech down while he is actually delivering it to the imaginary audience. Both escape the worst disadvantages of both methods and preserve the most important advantages.

In my own classes I do not think I can attribute ten bad speeches a year to thorough preparation by the wrong method; but I can attribute twice that number every week to *inadequate preparation.* The worst faults of the memorized speech show up most clearly in the speech that is only half memorized — and not half assimilated. The worst faults of the extemporaneous method show up most in the speech that is extemporaneous in thought as well as in text. *Thorough* preparation by any method will remove half the faults of that method. Wise adaptation to circumstances will remove the other half.

One common fault in preparation irrespective of method deserves special mention, because it is due less to laziness than to a natural error of judgment. That is the habit of preparing the first part of the speech too well at the expense of the last part. Nearly everybody falls into this error. The student would do well to drill into his head the golden maxim: "Prepare thoroughly the last part of a speech and the first part will prepare itself."

One more suggestion about preparation — which applies to many things besides preparation — and I have finished.

Let the student remember that the best way to work out his thoughts for effective public speaking is by talking them over with somebody else. He cannot prepare his speeches and he cannot prepare himself by sulking in a corner. Speaking is not an individual but a communal function. There may be human activities that can be learned in a hermitage through solitary meditation, but public speaking is not one of them. If the student is timid and afraid to meet people, his first task is to overcome that feeling in everyday life. To communicate effectively with other men he must know other men, and he must get used to the feeling of having them know him. To develop a thought most effectively for sharing with others he must seek the reactions of others to that thought. And to perfect himself in the useful art that is expanded conversation, he must expand himself through conversation.

APPENDIX A

VOCAL EXERCISES

General Instructions. — The exercises listed below are few in number, but are carefully selected to correct the commonest faults which are capable of correction by such means.

Do not attempt to do all the exercises, but select — preferably with the aid of a competent teacher — the particular ones which seem to fit your individual case. Practice them carefully at least once a day, five or ten minutes at a time. Always stop and rest at the first sign of dizziness or fatigue. Never persist in an exercise that gives you a sense of strain or discomfort, especially in the throat; if you cannot find out what is wrong seek help of someone who can. *The presence of strain in the throat is a sure sign that harm, not good, is being done.*

Practice when you are in the mood for relaxation, yet are not physically fatigued. Have the window open, if possible; at any rate avoid badly vitiated atmosphere. Stand erect, but with an easy natural posture, free from stiffness. Try to cultivate a sense of freedom and exhilaration in doing the exercises. Do not think of the anatomy of the throat. Remember that in correct voice production one is *unconscious* of the throat. If you must strain something, strain the heavy muscles about the waistline.

If you happen to catch a cold or sore throat, keep up the breathing exercises, but omit the exercises in vocalization, or such of them as cause you any discomfort. Avoid abuse of the voice at all times; do not shout yourself hoarse, or sing beyond your range, or sing falsetto. Remember that a few brief exercises cannot compete with hours and hours of daily abuse. Endeavor always to build up a healthy, vigorous body; good speaking voices are seldom found in individuals of poor physique.

No matter what other exercises you do, always begin with No. 1, and end with No. 2.

I. BREATHING EXERCISES

Note. — Correct breathing involves expansion of the waistline as well as the chest, and great muscular activity at the center of the body; but it is not done with the abdomen, or the shoulders, or the diaphragm: *it is done with the lungs.* It is done with all parts of the lungs, including the much neglected lower parts; and by a curious trick of nature you feel, when you inhale correctly, as if the air came up through your body instead of down through your throat. But nevertheless you breathe with your lungs, and you will gain nothing by attempting to revise your anatomy. The chief qualities to work for in breathing are fullness and freedom. The chief reactions to guard against are dizziness and fatigue.

1. Exercise to wash out the lungs. — Exhale slowly, bending forward from the waist with the arms extended towards the toes and the shoulders rounded so as to compress the lungs and force the air out. Empty the lungs as completely as possible without discomfort. Inhale to full capacity as you come back to the erect position. Repeat three times.

2. Relaxation exercise. — Inhale deeply, raising the arms over the head. Relax, and exhale slowly, simulating a hearty but silent yawn, and letting the arms fall limply at the sides. Repeat three times.

3. Simple breathing exercise. — Inhale deeply, keeping the shoulders back and raising the arms over the head to a vertical position. Do not hold the breath, but begin exhaling immediately without closing the passages; exhale slowly and evenly, bringing the arms down, and stopping when the body feels relaxed. Do not force the exhalation or empty the lungs. Repeat six times.

4. Exercise to lower the breathing center. — Exhale, allowing the head to droop forward and the body to hang perfectly limp down to the waistline. Then, keeping the body and neck still limp, inhale deeply from the bottom upward (at least it should feel so) until the force of the air straightens the body and neck and lifts the head up to an erect position. Try to feel as limp as a toy balloon; let the air do the work of straightening you up, not your muscles. Repeat six times.

5. Breath reserve exercise. — Inhale deeply. Exhale partially, letting only about one third of the breath go and keeping the rest in reserve. Inhale again to full capacity; let one third go, inhale again, and repeat six times. Rest a few seconds and repeat again six times.

6. Breath capacity exercise. — Fill the lungs by inhaling a little air at a time in a succession of quick jerks, packing the lungs tight after each jerk, and letting no air escape. When the lungs are full, close the valve, so to speak, and hold the air for about five seconds. Then release it suddenly and relax. Rest before repeating. Repeat six times.

7. **Breath control exercise.** — Inhale in a succession of quick jerks as in Exercise 6, but avoid packing the air after each jerk, that is, avoid closing the valve in the throat. Hold the air instead by controlling from the center of the body, and as soon as the lungs are full begin exhaling slowly and evenly as in Exercise 3. Rest before repeating. Repeat six times.

8. **Abdominal exercise.** — (To strengthen the abdominal muscles and associate them with breath control.) Strain the muscles about and above the waistline as if trying to burst a tight corset; but be moderate; the object is not to induce apoplexy. Keeping the muscles tense, inhale as deeply as you can with comfort, exhale, and repeat three or four times. At the first hint of dizziness, stop, relax, and rest. Then repeat.

9. **Diaphragm exercise.** — (To limber up the diaphragm and stimulate the lower lobes of the lungs.) Take a moderately full breath; then using the nasal passages only inhale and exhale rapidly and repeatedly like a dog panting. At the first hint of dizziness, stop, relax, and rest. Then repeat.

10. **Expulsive exercise.** — (To assist in developing force of utterance.) Inhale deeply, then instantly expel the breath on the sound of *H*. Be forceful within reason, but do not turn yourself inside out. Do not attempt to empty the lungs completely. Be sure that the lower portion of the lungs plays a part in the

expulsion, and that you feel the muscular activity more at the waistline than at the shoulders and neck. Repeat six times.

11. Breath economy exercise.—Inhale deeply. Prepare to exhale on the sound of *H*; then exhale so slowly that the sound is practically inaudible. Seek to make the exhalation very even, smooth, and gentle; so gentle that it will not extinguish a lighted match. Avoid all strain, and do not empty the lungs beyond the point of relaxation. Regulate by muscular control from the center of the body, and not by squeezing the throat. Repeat six times.

II. EXERCISES IN VOCALIZATION

Note. — Correct vocalization presupposes correct breathing, and depends also upon freedom from throat strain and fullness of resonance. With the aid of a piano determine your natural range of voice; then strike off two whole notes at the top and two at the bottom, and confine all your exercises to the middle portion remaining (unless instructed otherwise by a competent teacher). Choose the easiest tone of all as the starting point. Be easy on the voice at all times, avoiding strain and abuse. Do not shout yourself hoarse at the football games, unless you wish to make a deliberate and perhaps permanent sacrifice in the interest of school spirit. Do not sing beyond your range, even in fun. Do not use your voice when you have a sore throat, and remember always that pain in the throat is a sure sign that harm is being done.

12. Exercise for ease. — Inhale deeply but lazily; open the mouth wide, and yawn prodigiously, saying, *Ah, hah, hoh, hum!* with freedom and abandon. Do not repeat, but finish off instead with Exercise 3, repeated three times.

13. Forwarding exercise. — Speak the following sounds naturally and in the given order: *Oo, oh, aw, ah, ă* (as in *at*). Repeat ten times. Note that the mouth tends to open wider with each sound in the series, and that the focus of the tone seems to move forward; the *oo* feels down in the throat, the *oh* in the back of the mouth, the *aw* in the center of the mouth, the *ah* in the front of the mouth just back of the teeth, and the *ă* almost out of the mouth. When you have made certain of this feeling, speak the sounds in reverse order, striving to keep the tone forward in the mouth as much as possible without losing the quality of the vowels. Repeat five times.

14. Humming exercise. — (To assist in forwarding and to develop head resonance.) Take a full easy breath, and choosing a fairly low pitch hum a full round tone on the sound of *M*. Keep the tone well forward in the head, so that the bones of the forehead and upper jaw vibrate. Keep the lips lightly closed, and note the tickling sensation at the point of contact, caused by the vibration. Repeat until you get a good tone easily. Then, using the original low tone as *do* of the scale, hum a series of simple exercises corresponding to *do, re, do; do, re, mi, re, do;* and so on, one note higher each time, but not beyond your range. Do not pronounce the syllables, however; keep the lips closed and hum on the sound of *M*, with the tone well forward in the head. Repeat twice.

15. Resonance exercise. — Take a full easy breath, and choosing a fairly low pitch sing the syllable *mum* rapidly and repeatedly as long as the breath lasts. Repeat, one note higher in the scale each time, until you reach the octave above, or until it threatens to become uncomfortable. On each repeat start rapidly, say five syllables per second, and slow down as you near the end of your breath; but keep up the volume of sound until you stop and stop soon enough to make this possible. Try to feel that the breath comes up through the body, and that the tone is produced in the front of the head. Try to develop a good tone, pleasing to the ear. Above all, be sure that there is a continuous flow of sound from start to finish, the *M* being carried over from syllable to syllable.

16. Exercise to correct breathiness. — Take a full easy breath, choose a comfortable middle pitch and sing on *Ah*. Sustain the tone, applying the air very gently, and using as little as possible. Do not try to sing very loud; aim to increase the *purity* of the tone, just as a flute player would — that is, by applying just enough air at just the right pressure, and wasting none. When you succeed you should get a full clear tone, with good carrying power, yet with so little expenditure of breath that you can hold a lighted match just in front of the mouth without extinguishing it; you should be able to sustain the tone for twenty-five seconds on one breath. Repeat six times. Try a higher or lower pitch occasionally.

17. Exercise to correct nasality. — Hum a middle tone on *M*, well forward in the head; then alternate with a full open *Ah* on a continuous flow of breath. Then hold the *Ah*, and with the thumb and forefinger alternately pinch and release the nose. Note the variation of sound. Now change the quality of the *Ah* tone until the pinching makes no difference in the quality. Practice this tone until you get it easily, still keeping the tone forward in the head, however. Finally, practice alternating the two types of *Ah* tone ten or twelve times. (This exercise will not cure all kinds of nasality, but it will help the teacher diagnose your case. Do not fail to report results to the teacher.)

18. Intonation exercise.—(To correct the habit of talking in consonants only; helps also to correct breathiness and harshness.) Choose a common expression such as "I am very pleased to make your acquaintance," or "How are the folks at home today?" and intone it — chant it, half sing it. Do not stick to a monotone, but use a simple tune or melody on two or three easy notes. Change the tune with each repetition. Choose a different expression each day, varying the selection with proverbs and with bits of verse in different moods. Seek musical rather than emotional effect (Compare with Exercise 19). Play with the selection. Be careful not to strain. Repeat ten times, and on the last repetition come back to a normal, natural inflection, speaking the selection as you would in real life.

19. Exercise for expressiveness of voice. — Select a short lyric poem, expressing some deep, or tender, or hilarious, or violent feeling, and read it aloud several times, aiming to throw your whole soul into it. Do not be afraid to exaggerate a little; put in plenty of "sob stuff" — tear the passion to tatters. Do the exercise when you are alone, of course; barricade your door and cut loose. Choose a different selection each day; run the gamut of emotions from extreme pathos to extreme mirth; but keep them distinct, and know which is which. Try to feel the emotion in each case, deeply and sincerely. Bring the tears to your own eyes by the sound of your voice. (Note that this is not advice to be followed in public, but a private exercise for unexpressive voices.)

20. Pitch correction exercise. — Take an easy sentence of your own and repeat it several times, speaking it naturally. Then *intone* it in monotone, aiming to preserve the same average pitch as in the spoken sentence. This is difficult, but can be done after a little practice. Repeat until you have it. Then find the key on the piano which corresponds to the pitch of the sentence. Strike the key, repeat the intoned sentence several times, and then strike the key below (if your voice is too high) or above (if your voice is too low), and intone the sentence on the new pitch. Repeat several times. Then *speak* the sentence with the new pitch as an average. After two or three days bring the pitch down (or up) two notes instead of one. When you have established the pitch where you want it, start over again with another sentence. (The help of a teacher is almost essential with this exercise.)

21. Exercise for force and variety. — Shout each of the following syllables vigorously on a separate breath: *Hup, hee, hay, haw, hah, hoh, hoo.* Do not strain, however. Then take a sentence of expository or argumentative nature, carefully pick out the words deserving of emphasis, and speak the sentence giving exaggerated force to those words. Give greatest force to the one word that seems to be the key-word of the sentence. Repeat with other sentences. Pound the desk or lectern with your fist to emphasize your shouts.

III. ARTICULATION EXERCISES

Note. — The whole secret of articulation exercises is in doing them carefully and slowly enough for accuracy. Think of the meaning, and let speed take care of itself. Seek frequent criticisms from the teacher, for you cannot judge your own articulation satisfactorily. Remember that you must know how a word ought to be pronounced — a matter of vocabulary — before you can learn to enunciate it correctly. If possible, have some one at home check you up constantly on both pronunciation and enunciation, especially on vowel quality. You need more frequent reminders than the teacher can give you.

Flexibility Exercises

22. Speak in rotation the syllables *ee, ah, oo,* exaggerating the lip movements slightly. Repeat ten times.

23. Speak in rotation the syllables *it, ip, ik,* distinguishing them clearly. Repeat ten times.

24. Speak in rotation the syllables *are, oh, dee,* exaggerating the lip movements slightly. Repeat ten times.

25. Speak in rotation the syllables *kew, pee, tee,* distinctly, with exaggeration, but without stiffness. Repeat ten times.

26. Speak in rotation the syllables *ell, oh, em,* exaggerating the lip movements slightly. Repeat ten times.

Enunciation Exercises

27. Demosthenes' exercise. — With two or three small pebbles in the mouth speak a fairly long sentence as clearly and distinctly as possible. Repeat until you have mastered the sentence. Choose a new sentence each day. This is an old and hackneyed exercise, originally intended to overcome stammering, but it is still very useful for all-round improvement of enunciation. The principle is very simple: to stimulate the will power and strengthen the control by increasing the difficulty to be overcome; it is the same principle the baseball player uses when he swings two bats just before going to the plate. You can design an exercise on this same principle to help you fight almost any bad habit.

28. Exercise to correct "mushy" enunciation. — Speak the following as distinctly as possible: *She shuns the seashore since she saw the sea shells shining in the sun.* Repeat ten times. Change every two or three days to a new sentence involving the consonants that tend to sound mushy. Aim always at freedom and clearness; never at speed.

29. Exercise to correct slurring. — Speak the following as clearly and distinctly as possible: *A statistician protests that the Constitution has been too frequently attacked.* Repeat ten times. Change every two or three days to a new sentence involving the difficult combinations of consonants — *st*, *ts*, *pr*, *fr*, *th*, *kt*, *skt*, *dst*, *str*, *tr*, *tl*, etc.

30. Exercise in finishing sounds. — Speak the following as clearly and distinctly as possible: *Clayton* *kept a kind of cat, and Howard asked him for it.* Repeat ten times. Change every two or three days to a new sentence involving plenty of syllables ending in *t*, *d*, *k*, etc.

31. Auxiliary exercise. — With the aid of a mirror — or better, of a friend — practice silent enunciation and lip reading a few minutes every day. (Used alone this exercise will produce exaggerated lip movements; but used judiciously in combination with others it will help to encourage distinctness.)

Pronunciation Exercises.

(To correct a few common habitual mispronunciations, only; most cases of mispronunciation being matters of vocabulary.)

32. Exercise on long *u*. — Speak the following correctly and clearly: *To assume that the moon is the cause of lunacy is absolutely ridiculous and supremely stupid.* Repeat ten times. Change occasionally to another sentence involving long *u*.

33. Exercise on *oi* and *er*. — Speak the following correctly and clearly: *The girl did boil the bird in oil; the oily bird was early boiled.* Repeat ten times.

34. Exercise on *r*. — Speak the following under frequent criticism by the teacher: *Nowhere in American letters do we find a dramatist worthy of comparison with Shakespeare.*

35. Exercise on *th*. — Speak the following as it is spelled: *De guns tundered troo de tick of de fight, and we knew dat de flag was still dere.* Now speak it correctly: *The guns thundered through the thick of the fight, and we knew that the flag was still there.* Repeat five times each.

Note. — The student or teacher may readily devise similar exercises for the correction of other faults in articulation so that no more need be offered here. In general it may be said that earnestness of effort and deliberateness of manner will correct almost any fault of articulation yet discovered, barring only those due to serious physical malformation or to psychopathic conditions.

APPENDIX B

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUGGESTIONS

I. FOR THE FURTHER STUDY OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Note. — The following does not purport to be a complete bibliography of speech subjects; it is merely a list of two or three of the best books now available in each of the several fields most closely related to the student's problem of self-training for public speaking.

In Public Speaking

Winans, J. M. Public Speaking
The best comprehensive work on all phases of the subject.

Phillips, A. E. Effective Speaking
A standard work on the content and composition of the speech.

Woolbert, C. H. Fundamentals of Speech
A scientific analysis of the speech function in all of its phases; indispensable to those who expect to teach.

In Voice Culture

Lankow, E. How to Breathe Right
A little book of principles and exercises; very helpful.

Herman, R. L. An Open Door for Singers

A book of fundamental principles which hold good for speakers as well as singers; few books state them as clearly.

Curry, S. S. Mind and Voice

The safest and sanest of the comprehensive books on voice.

Mosher, J. A. The Effective Speaking Voice

A recent, smaller book, with much condensed information.

In Language and Vocabulary

In addition to regular textbooks in composition and rhetoric the following are suggested:

Greenough and Kittridge's Words and their Ways in English Speech

Fernald's Connectives of English Speech

Krapp's Elements of English Grammar

Phyfe's Eighteen Thousand Words Often Mispronounced

Lomer and Ashmun's Study and Practice of Writing English

Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases

Wilstach's Dictionary of Similes

In Argumentation and Debate

Baker, G. P. and Huntington, H. B. Principles of Argumentation

The standard text; a little difficult to read, but excellent for study.

O'Neill, Laycock, and Scales. Argumentation and Debate

The old Laycock and Scales revised, and the most readable book on the subject.

Foster, W. T. Argumentation and Debating

A good all-round book, widely used.

Covington, H. F. Fundamentals of Debate

A totally different treatment, from an imaginative point of view.

Maxcy, C. L. The Brief

A useful study of both legal and argumentative brief-drawing.

In the Literature of Public Speaking

The World's Best Orations (10 vols.) Ed. by D. J. Brewer.

The World's Famous Orations (10 vols., small) Ed. by W. J. Bryan.

An inexpensive set containing most of the great speeches of the world, some abridged. Very few recent speeches.

Modern Eloquence (13 vols.) Ed. by T. B. Reed.

Another large set, including more speeches of recent decades.

Models of Speech Composition Ed. by J. M. O'Neill.

The only satisfactory one-volume collection; 95 complete speeches, ancient, modern, and contemporary.

In Allied Studies Directly Useful to the Student of Public Speaking

Aristotle. Rhetoric

The foundation of much that has been written since.

Jevons, W. S. Lessons in Logic
The best known text in this subject.

Coppée, H. Elements of Logic
An excellent book, clearer, more practical, and more readable than Jevons.

Euclid. Elements of Geometry
Two thousand years old, but the best book on the subject, and highly useful to the student of argumentation.

Chauvenet, Wm. Treatise on Elementary Geometry
One of the best modern works.

James, Wm. Principles of Psychology
A famous treatise, full of knowledge directly useful to the speaker.

Bassett, L. E. Handbook of Oral Reading
The best book on a subject in which the speaker should be proficient.

The Quarterly Journal of Speech Education. Ed. by C. H. Woolbert.
The one important periodical on public speaking and allied subjects, and indispensable to the teacher. Published by the National Association of Teachers of Speech, R. K. Immel, University of Michigan, Treasurer.

II. FOR REFERENCE

Note. — Only a few of the most important reference books are here listed, together with a few concise and inexpensive volumes which the student may wish to place on his own shelves.

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

A New English Dictionary (Oxford Dictionary)
The largest and most authoritative. No student can afford to be unacquainted with this great work.

The Century Dictionary and Encyclopedia
The second best dictionary, and the best American.

Webster's International Dictionary
The best one-volume dictionary.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary
One of the best in desk size.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary
Inexpensive; desk size. Abridged from the New English Dictionary.

Encyclopedia Britannica
Too well known to need description.

New International Encyclopedia
Inferior to the Britannica in many respects, but a little more evenly balanced and more inclusive.

Handbooks of Allusion

A Reader's Handbook (Brewer)
Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (Brewer)
A Smaller Classical Dictionary (Smith) (In Everyman's Library)
A Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology (Edwardes) (In Everyman's Library)
Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations (Hoyt)
Familiar Quotations (Bartlett)

Historical and Statistical Information

Ploetz, C. Manual (formerly Epitome) of Universal History

The world's history in chronological outline.

Putnam, G. P. Handbook of Universal History

Universal Atlas of the World

Cyclopedia of American Government (3 vols.)

Cyclopedia of Political Economy and U. S. History (3 vols.)

The Statesman's Year Book (annual)

The Anglo-American Year Book (annual)

The World Almanac (annual)

Who's Who in America (annual)

The Women's Who's Who of America

Dictionary of National Biography

The standard biographical dictionary of England.

National Cyclopedia of American Biography

The American counterpart.

Lippincott's Pronouncing Biographical Dictionary

A smaller general work (2 vols)

Bibliographical Guides and Indexes

Publishers' Trade List Annual

Annual price list of American publications.

United States Catalog of Books in Print (and Supplements)

A permanent list of contemporary American books.

Reference Catalog of Current Literature

A similar list of English publications.

Poole's Index to Periodical Literature

Well known and useful, but only up to 1906.

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature
Has replaced Poole in recent years; name recently changed to
International Index to Periodicals

III. FOR THE GENERAL EDUCATION OF THE SPEAKER

Note. — The titles here listed are intended merely to suggest some of the lines of reading most likely to assist the student in the sort of self-development without which a man has little right to claim the leadership of thought implied in public speaking. The regular formal textbooks which the student is most apt to meet in his various courses have been purposely excluded as taken for granted. No attempt has been made to cover each field completely; that is left to the textbooks. The books mentioned have been selected for their established greatness, or for their direct usefulness in furnishing thought-material; either, or both.

For Historical Background

Wells, H. G. Outline of History
Van Loon, H. Story of Mankind
Thucydides. History of the Peloponnesian War
Plutarch. Lives of Illustrious Men
Grote, G. History of Greece
Gibbon, E. Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire
Carlyle, T. The French Revolution
Green, J. R. Short History of the English People
McMaster, J. B. History of the American People

For Scientific Background

Thomson, J. A. Outline of Science
Pearson, K. Grammar of Science
Bacon, F. Novum Organum, and Advancement of Learning
Max-Müller, F. The Science of Thought
Darwin, C. The Origin of Species
Huxley, H. Man's Place in Nature
Haeckel, E. The Evolution of Man

For Political, Economic, and Social Background

Plato. Republic
Aristotle. Politics
Economics
Machiavelli, N. The Prince
More, Sir T. Utopia
Rousseau, J. J. The Social Contract
Smith, A. The Wealth of Nations
George, H. Progress and Poverty
Mill, J. S. Liberty
Spencer, H. Principles of Sociology
Maine, H. S. Popular Government
Bryce, J. The American Commonwealth

For Philosophical and Religious Background

The Bible. Analytical edition in Everyman's Library.
Plato. Dialogues
Aristotle. Nichomachean Ethics
Poetics

Spinoza, B. de Ethics
Locke, J. Letters on Toleration
Paine, T. Age of Reason
Drummond, H. Natural Law in the Spiritual World
Nietzsche, F. Thus Spake Zarathustra
Schopenhauer, A. Essays
Lodge, Sir O. The Survival of Man
James, Wm. Human Immortality
Maeterlinck, M. The Great Secret
Chesterton, G. K. Orthodoxy

For Literary Background

No brief list of the world's greatest books could possibly satisfy anybody, even the compiler; but I challenge the student to read the twenty-five here listed (or twenty-five better ones) without showing some signs of literary background.

The Bible, King James Version
Shakespeare's Plays
Homer's Iliad
Chaucer, G. Canterbury Tales
Bunyan, J. The Pilgrim's Progress
The Arabian Nights
Cervantes, M. Don Quixote
Fielding, H. Tom Jones
Defoe, D. Robinson Crusoe
Goldsmith, O. The Vicar of Wakefield
Burns, R. Poems
Goethe, J. W. von Faust
Boswell, J. Life of Johnson
Scott, Sir W. Ivanhoe
Dickens, C. Tale of Two Cities

Thackeray, W. M. Vanity Fair
Tennyson, A. Idylls of the King
Dumas, A. The Three Musketeers
Hugo, V. Les Miserables
Stevenson, R. L. Treasure Island
Eliot, G. Silas Marner
Hawthorne, N. House of Seven Gables
Poe, E. A. Tales of Mystery and Imagination
Meredith, G. Richard Feveril
Hardy, T. Far from the Madding Crowd

IV. FOR SUGGESTION AND SOURCE OF MATERIAL

Books (other than fiction) that Have Provoked Discussion

Chesterton, G. K. What's Wrong with the World
Ferrero, G. Ancient Rome and Modern America
Lodge, Sir O. Raymond
Roosevelt, T. Fear God and Take Your Own Part
Thayer, W. R. Democracy: Discipline: Peace
Bok, E. The Americanization of Edward Bok
Mirrors of Washington (Anonymous)
Stoddard, L. The Rising Tide of Color
The Revolt Against Civilization
Wells, H. G. The War of the Civilizations
Russell, B. Bolshevism: Practice and Theory
Rathenau, W. The New Society
Lewisohn, L. Up Stream
Hutchinson, H. G. The Fortnightly Club
Sanger, M. The Pivot of Civilization

Stimulating Essays and Collections of Essays

Emerson, R. W. Conduct of Life, and other essays.
Eliot, C. W. Training for an Effective Life
Bennett, A. How to Live on Twenty-four Hours a Day
Briggs, Le B. Essays on College Life
Benson, A. C. From a College Window
Huneker, G. G. Iconoclasts
Meredith, G. Comedy and the Comic Spirit
Perry, B. The American Mind
Chesterton, G. K. Things I Saw in America
Shaw, G. B. The Case for Equality
Bok, E. Why I Believe in Poverty
Lindsay, B. B. The Doughboy's Religion
Maeterlinck, M. Death
Modern Essays, Ed. by Berdan, Schultz, and Joyce
  Widely varied, thought-provoking essays by many authors.
Modern Essays, Ed. by Christopher Morley
Essays for College Men, Ed. by Norman Foerster
  Same, **Second Series,** Ed, by Foerster, Manchester and Young
Representative Essays in Modern Thought, Ed. by Steeves and Ristine
Selected Essays, Ed. by C. M. Fuess
Civilization in the U. S., Ed. by H. E. Stearns

Modern Novels that Have Aroused Discussion

Hardy, T. Tess of the D'Urbervilles
Butler, S. The Way of All Flesh
Poole, E. The Harbor

Gissing, G. Demos
Chesterton, G. K. Manalive
Sinclair, U. The Jungle
Wells, H. G. The Wife of Sir Isaac Harmon
Lewis, S. Main Street
Hutchinson, A. S. M. If Winter Comes
Churchill, W. The Inside of the Cup
Galsworthy, J. The Forsyte Saga
Dos Passos, J. R. Three Soldiers
Fitzgerald, F. S. The Beautiful and Damned
Stribling, T. S. Birthright

Modern Plays that Have Aroused Discussion

Ibsen, H. The Doll's House, Pillars of Society, Ghosts
Shaw, G. B. Man and Superman, The Doctor's Dilemma
Jones, H. A. Michael and His Lost Angel
Barrie, J. M. The Admirable Crichton, Mary Rose
Bennett, A. Milestones
Mitchell, L. The New York Idea
Houghton, S. Hindle Wakes
Ficke, A. D. Mr. Faust
Galsworthy, J. Strife, Justice, The Skin Game
Barker, G. The Madras House
Glaspell, S. Inheritors
Tarkington, B. and Wilson, H. L. The Gibson Upright
Dane, C. A Bill of Divorcement
Molnar, F. The Devil, Liliom
O'Neill, E. The Emperor Jones, Anna Christie, The Hairy Ape

Poems that Suggest Ideas for Discussion

Wordsworth, W. Ode on Intimations of Immortality
Tennyson, A. Locksley Hall
Whitman, W. Leaves of Grass
Thompson, F. The Hound of Heaven
Hardy, T. Wessex Poems
Frost, R. North of Boston
Masters, E. L. Spoon River Anthology
Noyes, A. What Grandfather Said, Five Criticisms, Touchstone on a Bus, A Ballad of the Easiest Way

Periodicals

Note. — Articles not yet published in book form have been excluded from all the above lists; yet many of the best suggestions for speeches are to be found in such articles. For that reason the student is urged to keep posted on the contents of all current periodicals. The following are especially useful:

The Congressional Record. The one completely unbiased and uncensored publication; published daily by the Government; full of basic material on all current topics of national scope.

The Literary Digest. An impartial weekly review and pool of press opinion.

Review of Reviews. An old-established monthly review.

The Christian Science Monitor. A newspaper that tries to be national in scope and balanced in interest.

Current Opinion. Another monthly review, with special articles.

The Outlook. A review, but with editorial policy and special articles.

The Atlantic Monthly. A treasury of thoughtful articles.

The Dial. A liberal forum, with a literary bent.

The New Republic. A discussion paper appealing especially to discontented intellectuals.

The Nation. Another.

The American Magazine. Exactly opposite in spirit.

APPENDIX C

TOPIC SUGGESTIONS

General

1. **Current events,** and current discoveries in art, science, and philosophy, offer of course the most prolific sources of material for class-room speeches; and the best way to keep in touch with them is through the daily newspapers and the periodicals (See Appendix B). Since the interest in current topics is usually more or less temporary they have been excluded from the list of topics noted below.

2. **Campus topics** are useful for short speeches, but the student is cautioned against the all-but-universal error of taking campus topics too lightly and neglecting preparation.

3. **Discussions in other courses** suggest many topics, with the additional advantage that they permit the student to economize labor and do more intensive work by preparing two lessons at once.

4. **The study of public speaking** itself offers material for speeches on the seminar plan. For example, a student may take the subject of "Attention," and after reading Chapter V. of this book and, let us say, the chapters on "Attention" in James' *Principles of Psychology* and Winans' *Public Speaking*, formulate and express his own opinions on the subject.

5. The impulse to answer others, either to improve upon what they have said or to refute them, not only provides good topics, but tends to arouse the student, make him less self-conscious, and develop his sense of communication.

Specific

The following one hundred topics of successful class speeches have been selected with little regard to balance and proportion, but with an eye to their possible suggestiveness; the student will find them chiefly useful as starting-points for further thought. The simple device of taking a topic from the list and changing the purpose or the point of view will sometimes give the student just what he wants; or the equally simple one of keeping the purpose and changing the scope of the subject. It will be noted that the topics are classified according to purpose as purposes are classified in Chapter III.

1. To inform

A Bit of Inside Information

By a student who has figured in an unpublished army scandal.

The French Battlefields, Four Years After

By a former soldier just back from a tour of France.

Some Little Known Facts About the Bible

By a divinity student who has been making a special study of the history of the Scriptures.

Ectoplasm

A summary of the evidence regarding this strange phenomenon, by a student interested in spiritualism.

How a Modern Hotel Is Run

By a student whose father owns one.

The Swiss System of Military Training

The facts about it, by a student of military science.

The Truth About Our Wars

By an iconoclast who has been reading records and statistics.

The Scientific Evidence in Support of a Belief in Immortality

An impartial, impersonal summary of the known facts.

2. To enlighten

What Is Education?

An explanation of one student's understanding of the term.

What Is Freedom of Speech?

By a law student familiar with court decisions in the matter.

Lawful and Unlawful Radicalism

An attempt to define the difference, by another law student.

Aristotle's Theories of Government

An explanation of a most interesting point of view.

The Difference Between Socialism and Bolshevism

By an ex-Socialist who is also a student of Russian affairs.

The New Movement in the Art of the Theatre

An attempt to explain Gordon Craig and some of his disciples.

Aristotle's Theory of Tragic Poetry

An analysis of the tragic beauty in Shakespeare's plays in terms of the basic principles laid down by the great Athenian.

The Theory of Evolution

What it means and what it does not mean.

National Evolution

An analysis of Bernhardi's doctrine.

Atheism and Agnosticism Distinguished

By an agnostic who declines to be considered an atheist.

The Religion of the Red Man

By a student who has lived among the Chippewas.

The Final Solution of the Liquor Problem

Explaining a new and original plan.

Democracy in Industry

Explanation of a plan to end strikes.

The German Idea of Education

By a student who has been to school in four countries.

Psychoanalysis and Dreams

By a disciple of Freud.

3. To convince

How Germany Won the War

By a student who thinks she did.

Should the U. S. Adopt a System of Universal Military Training?

By an admirer of the Swiss System.

Are We an Improvement on Our Fathers, Morally?

By a young man who thinks not.

Have the Labor Unions Outgrown Their Usefulness?

By a former sympathiser whose sympathy has been alienated.

Should the Publication of Foreign Language Newspapers in the U. S. Be Prohibited?

By a student from Milwaukee.

Should Immigration Be Restricted by a Personnel Test?

By one who has observed the failure of the "Melting Pot."

Should the U. S. Adopt a Responsible Cabinet Form of Government?

By an admirer of the British system, in disgust at many deadlocks at Washington.

Why I Agree with Nietzsche

By a believer in natural evolution.

In Defense of Machiavelli

By one who has just read "The Prince."

College Spirit, Real and Sham

An effort to prove that true loyalty is not to be measured in terms of shouting.

Can Our Movie Stars Act?

By one who speaks feelingly in the negative.

Will Incomes Be Equal in Utopia?

An attempt to refute Bernard Shaw's "Case for Equality."

Is the Doctrine of Individual Liberty Obsolete?

By one who deplores the rising tide of paternalism.

Does History Always Repeat Itself?

An attempt to prove the old saying a fallacy.

The Case Against Democracy

By one who has been reading Maine's "Popular Government."

The Evils of Vocational Education

By one who believes in democracy.

Shall We Scrap the Three R's?

By a school teacher, disgusted with educational fads.

The Evils of Co-education

By a student who would prefer college as Father used to describe it.

Should Examinations Be Abolished?

An attempt to prove that they are unfair and useless.

Should Education Be Made Easy?

By a teacher who thinks the Montessori method responsible for widespread debility of mind and character.

Shall We Abolish the Study of Latin and Greek?

An argument for the negative by a teacher of English.

Should Private Schools Be Abolished?

By a militant enemy of aristocracy.

Is Mass Education a Failure?

By an exponent of intellectual aristocracy.

Is Advertising Immoral?

By an ethical theorist whose pet aversion is waste.

Censorship and Public Morals

By one who thinks there should be more and sterner censorship.

A Defense of Popular Music

By one who does not like it, but believes in personal liberty.

In Defense of the Happy Ending

By a student who feels that life itself is sad enough.

In Defense of the Realistic Drama

An attempt to refute the arguments of Gordon Craig.

Peace At Any Price

By a pacifist who thinks some prices too high to pay.

Nationalize the Railroads

By one who is disgusted with both labor and capital.

4. To impress

Is Europe Dying?

By one who has been troubled by the signs of a decaying civilization

The Power of Organized Minorities

By one who would warn us of a menace.

Roosevelt in Retrospect

An admiring appraisal of his achievements.

Was Sherman Right?

By a student who has been to war.

Barbarous Homer

By a pacifist who finds the Iliad a bath of blood.

If Christ Were Here Today

An appraisal of our civilization in terms of Christ's teachings.

Patriotism?

An indictment of the sham variety.

Soviet America

A plausible but disturbing prophecy.

The American National Failing

By a student who thinks it is complacency.

The Unhappy Atheist

By one who has been reading Hardy's "Wessex Poems."

The Value of a College Theatre

By an enthusiast who thinks dramatics more educational than courses.

The Meaning and Value of Poetry
By one who believes it is the poet who perpetuates civilization.

The Menace of the Movies
By one who is disturbed by the bad ethics of certain films.

The Next War
A prophecy, by a student of military history.

The War of the Classes
By a student of Economics and Sociology.

The War of the Races
By one who prophesies the doom of the white races.

Henry David Thoreau
A lay sermon in appreciation of the hermit philosopher.

The Two Bacons
By a student of the sciences who thinks Roger Bacon and Francis Bacon the leading thinkers in the history of science.

The College Man's Religion
By a Methodist, who has read Lindsay's "The Doughboy's Religion."

American Business Ethics
An impressive indictment, by a former real estate salesman.

The Civilizing Influence of the Phonograph
By a teacher of music in the public schools.

English Literature and Ideals in America
By one who thinks them the fire under the "Melting Pot."

What We Owe to the British Navy
Our national existence since 1870, in the opinion of the speaker.

5. To excite

(Omitted, for reasons explained on page 18)

6. To actuate

Vote for Smith for Class President
A campus campaign speech.

Send a Kid to the Country
An appeal for funds to support a student camp for poor boys.

Support the Team
A plea for better cheering in a bad season.

Write a Letter to Bill Jones
A plea for cheering letters for a classmate in the hospital.

Get Acquainted With the Library
By one who has discovered that "browsing" is an important part of college education.

Know Your Own Language
By a teacher of etymology, to a class of teachers.

Be Tolerant
A direct appeal for fair minded consideration of the views of others.

7. To entertain

My Trip to South America
An interesting account by a student who has worked as a sailor.

Glycerine and Nitroglycerine
Humorous reactions to a photoplay of tears and terrors.

Putting It All Over Grandma
An amusing defense of the modern girl, by one.

Liquor in Literature
An amusing but imposing array of examples.

Silly Censorship
By a "movie fan" who has been suffering from it.

What Shall We Prohibit Next?
By a humorist who might be suspected of "wet" sentiments.

Toddling at Teacher's Apron Strings
By a student who can laugh at his own lack of self-reliance.

Utopia Up to Date
A satire on modern theories and "isms."

The Best Photoplay I Ever Saw
An entertaining discussion of it.

Classics that Couldn't Pass the Censor
By a good-natured soul who is more amused than embittered.

Some Curious Byways of Reading
An entertaining talk on books.

Fads and Fancies in Education
By a teacher who thinks supervisors most amusing.

Some New Things Under the Sun
An interesting mixture of humor and truth.

My Impressions of America and the Americans
By a Chinese student.

The Greatest Novel Ever Written
By a student who has just been reading it.

Should Millionaires Be Abolished?
By a student who is one.

The Possibilities of Radio
A fanciful dream of the future.

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